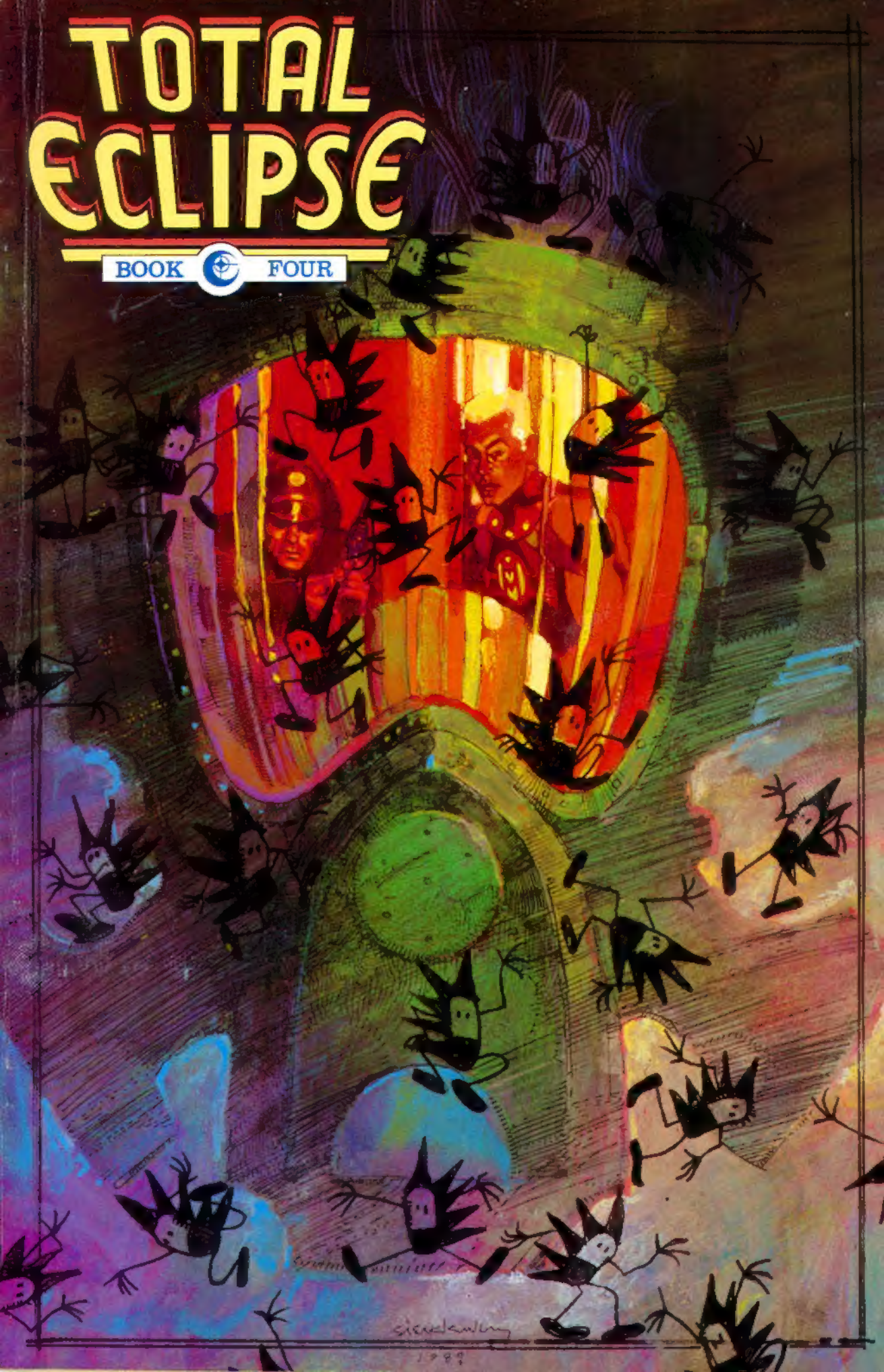
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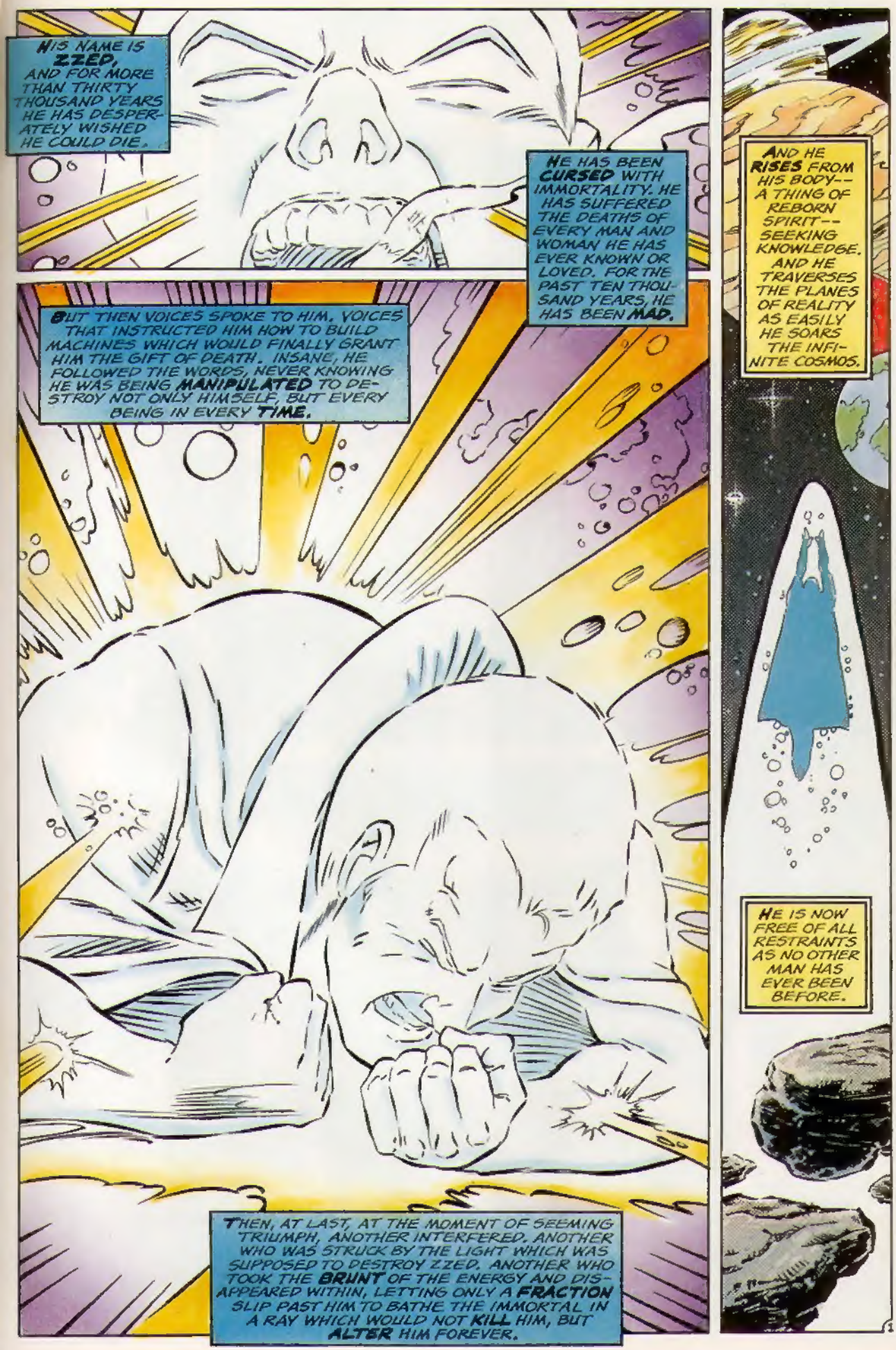
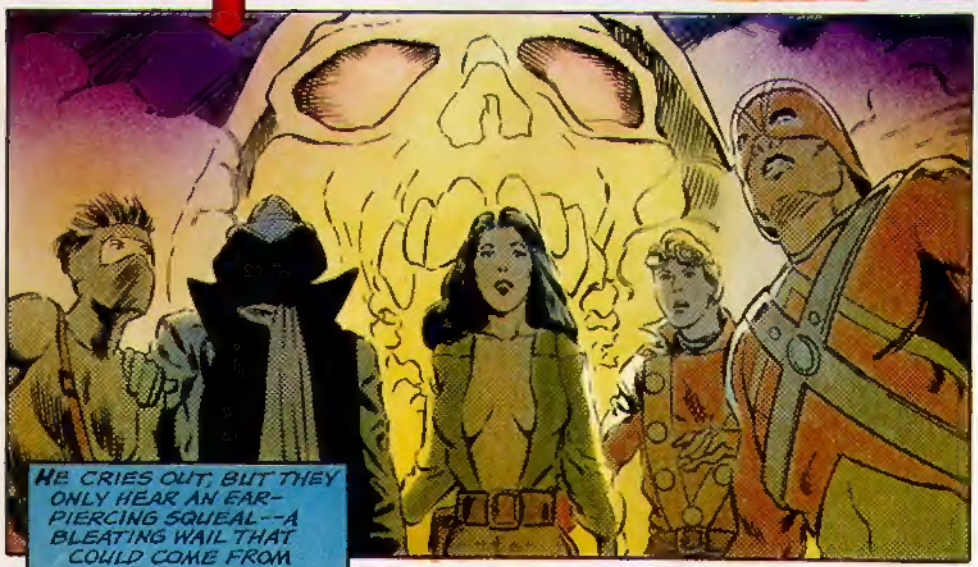

HIS NAME IS ZZED, AND FOR MORE THAN THIRTY THOUSAND YEARS HE HAS DESPERATELY WISHED HE COULD DIE.
HE HAS BEEN CURSED WITH IMMORTALITY. HE HAS SUFFERED THE DEATHS OF EVERY MAN AND WOMAN HE HAS EVER KNOWN OR LOVED. FOR THE PAST TEN THOUSAND YEARS, HE HAS BEEN MAD.
BUT THEN VOICES SPOKE TO HIM. VOICES THAT INSTRUCTED HIM HOW TO BUILD MACHINES WHICH WOULD FINALLY GRANT HIM THE GIFT OF DEATH. INSANE, HE FOLLOWED THE WORDS, NEVER KNOWING HE WAS BEING MANIPULATED TO DESTROY NOT ONLY HIMSELF, BUT EVERY BEING IN EVERY TIME.
THEN, AT LAST, AT THE MOMENT OF SEEMING TRIUMPH, ANOTHER INTERFERED. ANOTHER WHO WAS STRUCK BY THE LIGHT WHICH WAS SUPPOSED TO DESTROY ZZED. ANOTHER WHO TOOK THE BRUNT OF THE ENERGY AND DISAPPEARED WITHIN, LETTING ONLY A FRACTION SLIP PAST HIM TO BATHE THE IMMORTAL IN A RAY WHICH WOULD NOT KILL HIM, BUT ALTER HIM FOREVER.
AND HE RISES FROM HIS BODY-- A THING OF REBORN SPIRIT-- SEEKING KNOWLEDGE. AND HE TRAVERSES THE PLANES OF REALITY AS EASILY HE SOARS THE INFINITE COSMOS.
HE IS NOW FREE OF ALL RESTRAINTS AS NO OTHER MAN HAS EVER BEEN BEFORE.

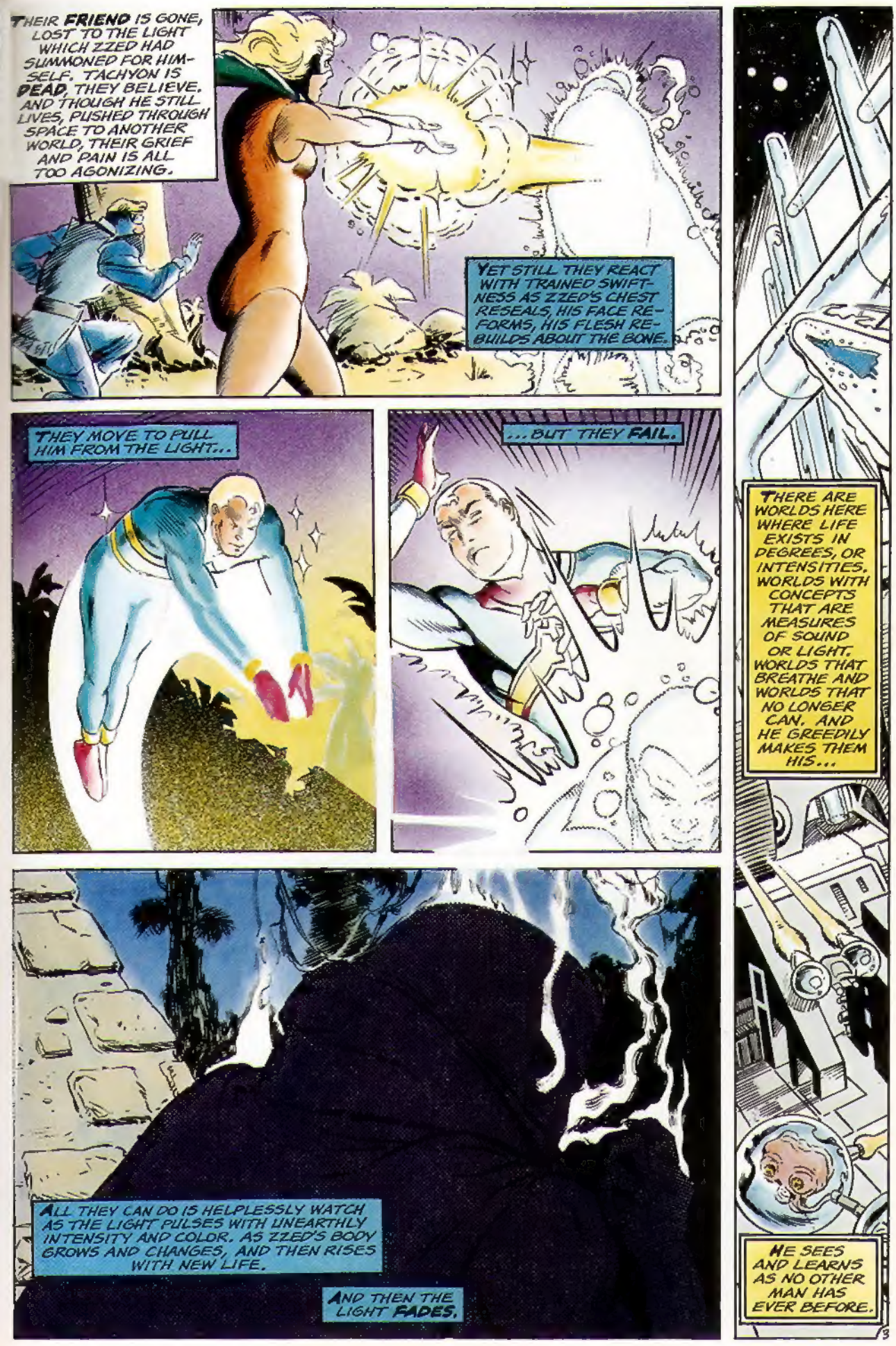
ZZED'S BODY STRUGGLES IN RESISTANCE AS HIS SOUL IS WRENCHED FREE FROM HIS FLESH. HE COLLAPSES IN EVER-INCREASING PAIN AS THE LIGHT WORMS ITS WAY THROUGH HIS EVERY ATOM.

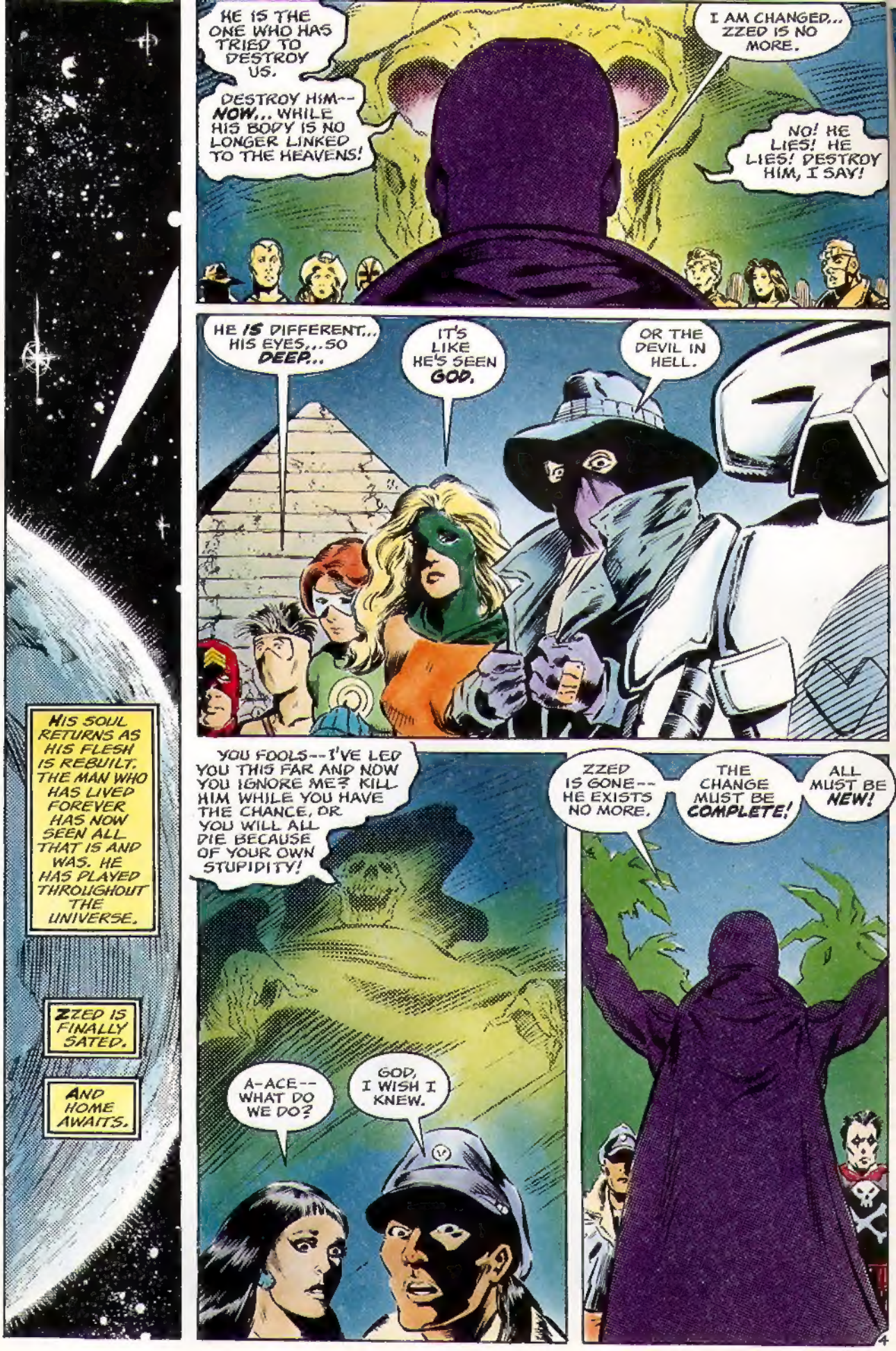


BLOOD GUSHES FROM HIS EYES AND EARS AND FINGERNAILS. THEN HIS CHEST SPLITS AND CARTILAGE CUTS HIS FLESH INTO MEATY RIBBONS.

HIS FACE PEELS BACK INTO A GRINNING SCARLET-DRENCHED SKULL WHICH THROBS AND EXPLODES.

HE IS ALIVE HERE IN THE INFINITE. ALIVE, QUESTING, QUESTIONING. WORLDS AND LIVES STROBE PAST HIM, FLICKERING THOUGHTS AND CONCEPTS PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN TO THINGS OF FLESH · THAT HE INGESTS WITH HUNGERING FEROCITY.
HE IS ALIVE AS NO OTHER MAN HAS EVER BEEN BEFORE.


THEIR FRIEND IS GONE, LOST TO THE LIGHT WHICH ZZED HAD SUMMONED FOR HIMSELF. TACHYON IS DEAD, THEY BELIEVE. AND THOUGH HE STILL LIVES, PUSHED THROUGH SPACE TO ANOTHER WORLD, THEIR GRIEF AND PAIN IS ALL TOO AGONIZING.
YET STILL THEY REACT WITH TRAINED SWIFTNESS AS ZZED'S CHEST RESEALS, HIS FACE REFORMS, HIS FLESH REBUILDS ABOUT THE BONE.
THEY MOVE TO PULL HIM FROM THE LIGHT...
...BUT THEY FAIL.
THERE ARE WORLDS HERE WHERE LIFE EXISTS IN DEGREES, OR INTENSITIES. WORLDS WITH CONCEPTS THAT ARE MEASURES OF SOUND OR LIGHT. WORLDS THAT BREATHE AND WORLDS THAT NO LONGER CAN. AND HE GREEDILY MAKES THEM HIS...
ALL THEY CAN DO IS HELPLESSLY WATCH AS THE LIGHT PULSES WITH UNEARTHLY INTENSITY AND COLOR. AS ZZED'S BODY GROWS AND CHANGES, AND THEN RISES WITH NEW LIFE.
AND THEN THE LIGHT FADES.
HE SEES AND LEARNS AS NO OTHER MAN HAS EVER BEFORE.

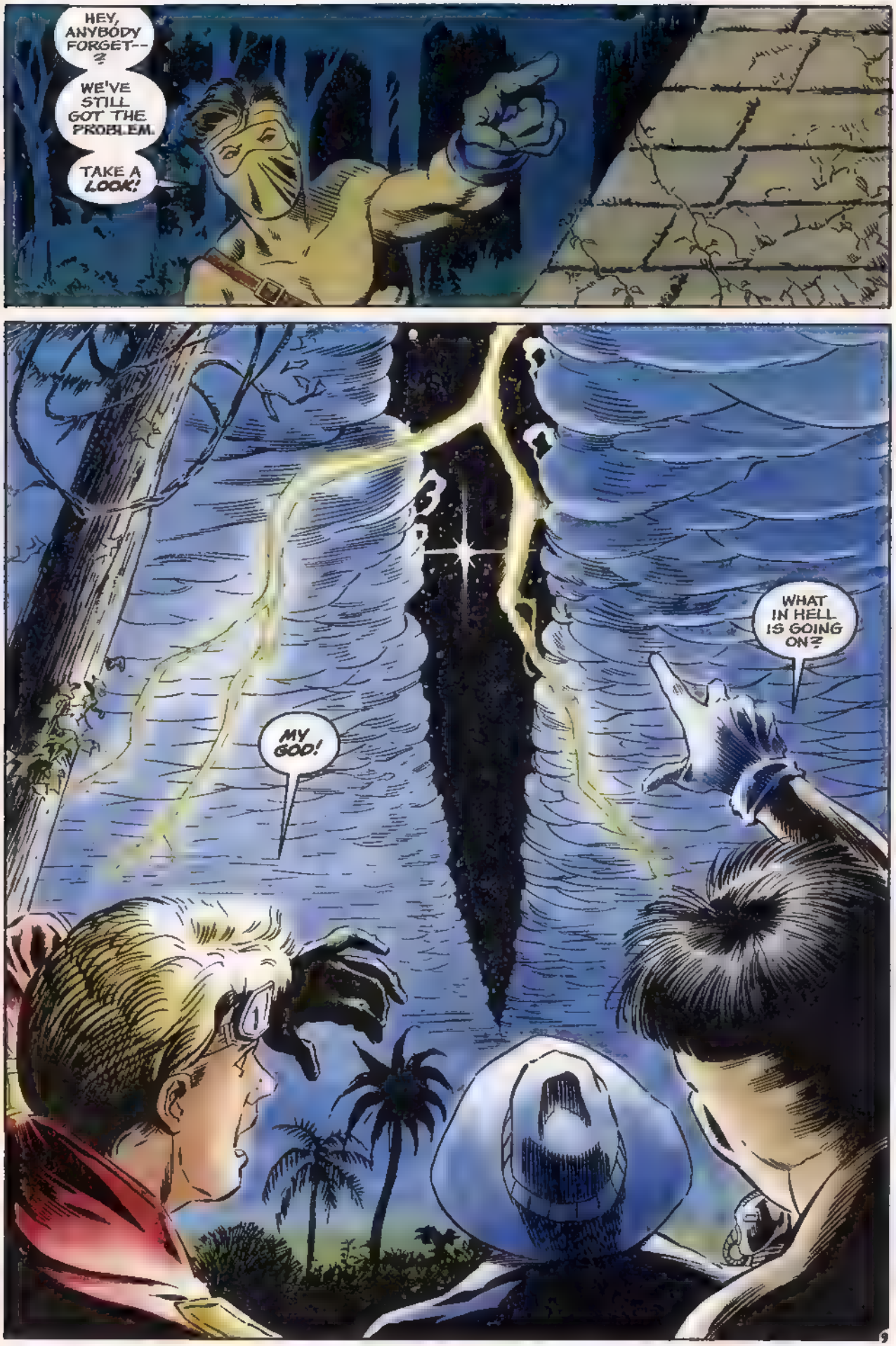

HE IS THE ONE WHO HAS TRIED TO DESTROY US.
DESTROY HIM-- NOW... WHILE HIS BODY IS NO LONGER LINKED TO THE HEAVENS!
I AM CHANGED... ZZED IS NO MORE.
NO! HE LIES! HE LIES! DESTROY HIM, I SAY!
HE IS DIFFERENT... HIS EYES...SO DEEP...
IT'S LIKE HE'S SEEN GOD.
OR THE DEVIL IN HELL.
HIS SOUL RETURNS AS HIS FLESH IS REBUILT. THE MAN WHO HAS LIVED FOREVER HAS NOW SEEN ALL THAT IS AND WAS. HE HAS PLAYED THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSE.
ZZED IS FINALLY SATED.
AND HOME AWAITS.
YOU FOOLS--I'VE LED YOU THIS FAR AND NOW YOU IGNORE ME? KILL HIM WHILE YOU HAVE THE CHANCE, OR YOU WILL ALL DIE BECAUSE OF YOUR OWN STUPIDITY!
A-ACE-- WHAT DO WE DO?
GOD, I WISH I KNEW.
ZZED IS GONE-- HE EXISTS NO MORE.
THE CHANGE MUST BE COMPLETE!
ALL MUST BE NEW!

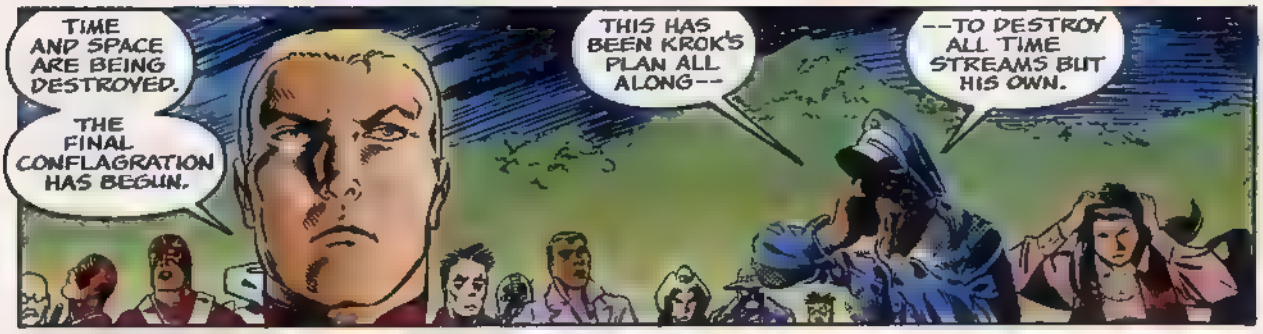
THIS IS...
REBIRTH!

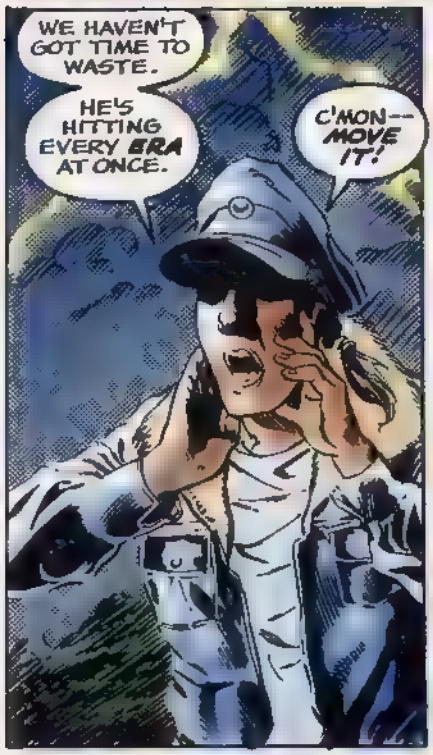
I SENSE YOUR CONFUSION, AND I UNDERSTAND.
BUT PLEASE... DO NOT WITHDRAW.
I AM AS I SAY-- RENEWED, REFORMED... REBORN.
BELIEVE ME.
IN YOU I SENSE TURMOIL--A FREE SOUL DARKENED WITH CHANGE...
WHAT I WAS NO LONGER MATTERS.
PERHAPS.
AND YOU, DAVID NELSON--
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, GLOW-EYES.
YOU AIN'T GETTIN' NEAR HIM.
I MEAN HIM NO HARM.
HOLY SHEEEEE--
THE CHANGE IN ME IS COMPLETE. ZZED DOES NOT EXIST. EVERY FIBER OF MY BEING HAS BEEN ALTERED AND IS NEW.
THE UNIVERSE HAS HUMBLED ME, DAVID. IT HAS SHOWN ME THINGS BEYOND COMPREHENSION. IT HAS SHOWN ME TRUTHS THAT MAKE ME WEAK WITH GRIEF.
ONCE I WAS IMMORTAL AND BELIEVED NOTHING COULD HURT ME. NOW I AM ALL-TOO MORTAL, AND I SEE WHAT A FOOL I WAS.
DAVID, WHAT I DID TO YOU,..AND TO YOUR FATHER... NOW REPULSES ME. MY DEEDS WERE UNFORGIVEABLE. NO APOLOGY ADEQUATE.
ALLOW ME TO COMPENSATE... ...ANY WAY I CAN.
I CAN SHOW YOU THE WONDERS OF THE UNIVERSE. I CAN TOUCH YOU AND CURE ALL ILLNESSES AND PAIN. I CAN SHOW YOU YOUR FATHER...
...PLEASE, DAVID-- LET ME ATONE FOR MY MISDEEDS.
N-NO... I CAN'T... I CAN'T.
YOU MUST.
I DUNNO--HOW DO WE KNOW HE ISN'T PLAYING GAMES? HE COULD TURN AROUND AND ZAP US.
IF HE WANTED TO DESTROY US, SOMETHING TELLS ME IT WOULDN'T BE MUCH OF A PROBLEM.

SO MANY DOUBTS, AND YET I SHOULD NOT EXPECT OTHERWISE.
WERE I IN YOUR PLACE, IT WOULD BE NO DIFFERENT.
BUT YOU-- PLEASE HEAR ME OUT.
UH, UH-- GET BACK. YOU KILLED OUR FRIEND...
TACHYON WAS HIS NAME... HE INTERCEPTED WHAT WOULD HAVE SLAIN ME...
...AND BECAUSE OF HIM, I LIVE THOSE YEARS WHICH ARE THE REST OF MY LIFE.
I AM IN HIS DEBT.
DEAD? NO... HARDLY THAT.
YOU THINK WE CARE? MAYBE YOU'RE ALIVE, BUT HE'S DEAD.
THE ONE YOU KNEW STILL EXISTS... HE HAS MERELY MOVED ON TO AN ALTER-NATE EXISTENCE.
THE APPEARANCE OF DEATH IS SO FINAL, SO DEFINITE. DON'T LET IT FOOL YOU.
OH ...WHY CAN'T THEY UNDER-STAND?
IT'S OKAY, AVALON. WE'LL BOTH MISS THAT BIG BLUE LUG.
I DUNNO-- WHAT DO YOU THINK?
MAN, YOU WANNA KNOW WHAT I'M THINKING? I'M THINKING THIS IS THE TIME FOR A NICE COLD LONE STAR.
THAT'S ABOUT THE ONLY THING THAT COULD MAKE SENSE RIGHT ABOUT NOW.
YOU DO SPEAK THE TRUTH--YOUR VOICE IS HONEST, WITHOUT ANY TINGE OF LIES.
ACCEPT MY APOLOGIES.

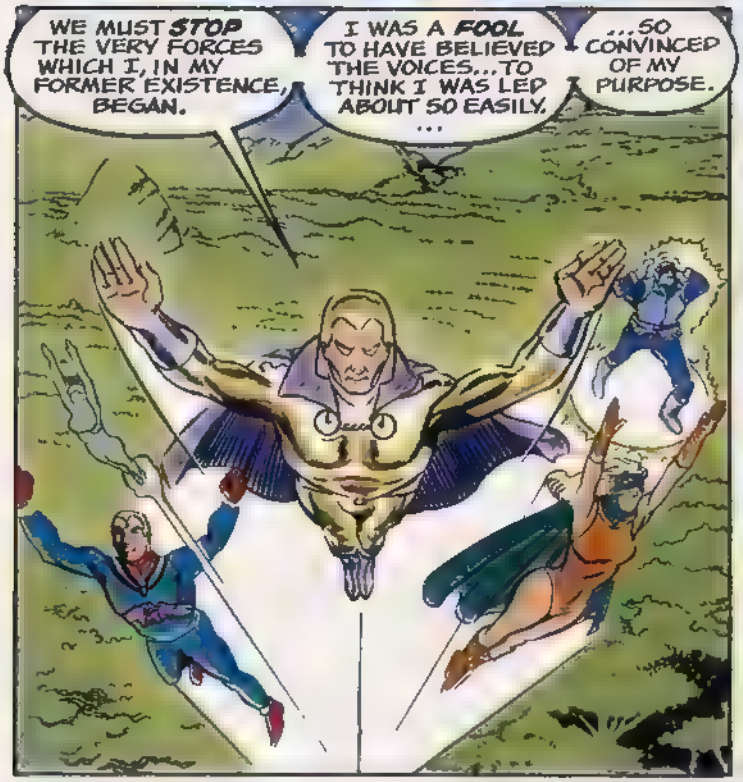
I SAW THE FUTURE, IF ONLY FOR A MOMENT. LIKE THE IMAGE ONE SEES FROM THE CORNER OF ONE'S EYE.
DO YOU WISH TO KNOW YOUR FATE?
NO-- I PREFER TO DEAL WITH IT AS IT COMES.
AS YOU WISH.
MY FRIENDS, WHAT ALTERED ME FROM THE MADMAN ZZED- BEING STILL LIVES...
...AND HE STILL THREATENS OUR VERY EXISTENCE.
WE MUST ACT BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.
HEY, WHO DIED AND MADE YOU BOSS?
GREAT. JUST WHAT WE NEED. ANOTHER ANAL RETENTIVE SUPERHERO TYPE.
SO WOTTA YOU GONNA CALL YOURSELF, HOT-SHOT? CAPTAIN BLANK EYES? MAJOR WONDER-FUL? HOWZABOUT PRIVATE PERFECT PERSON.
MAN, I TELL YA--THIS SUPER-HERO NAME CRAP MAKES ME SICK.
WE GONNA SAVE THE UNIVERSE --OR SET UP SOME LOUSY 900 NUMBER FOR KIDS TO DECIDE WHAT TO CALL YOU?
WAIT-- I KNOW...
BECAUSE I WANT HIM TO HEAL MY SPECIAL FRIEND WHO IS DARK BECAUSE OF THE ECLIPSE--
--WHY DON'T YOU CALL YOURSELF DOCTOR ECLIPSE?
FOR YOU, MY FRIEND, I WILL TAKE WHATEVER SOBRIQUET YOU PREFER.
IN YOUR HONOR, CALL ME DOCTOR ECLIPSE.

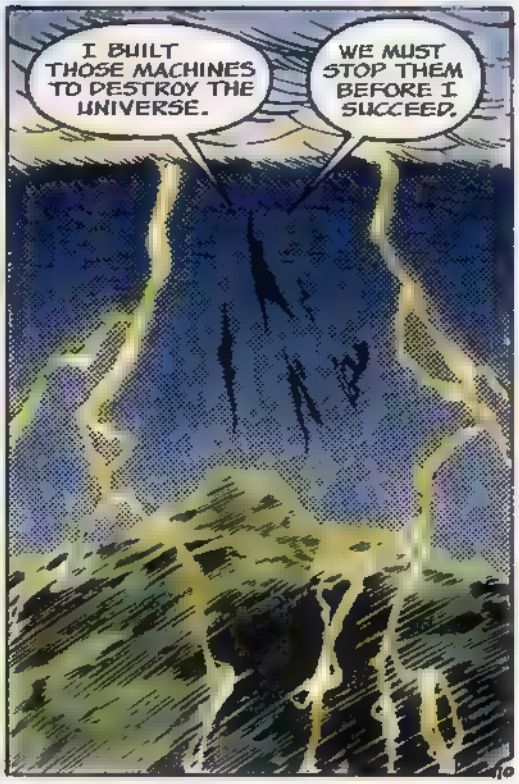

HEY, ANYBODY FORGET--?
WE'VE STILL GOT THE PROBLEM.
TAKE A LOOK!
MY GOD!
WHAT IN HELL IS GOING ON?

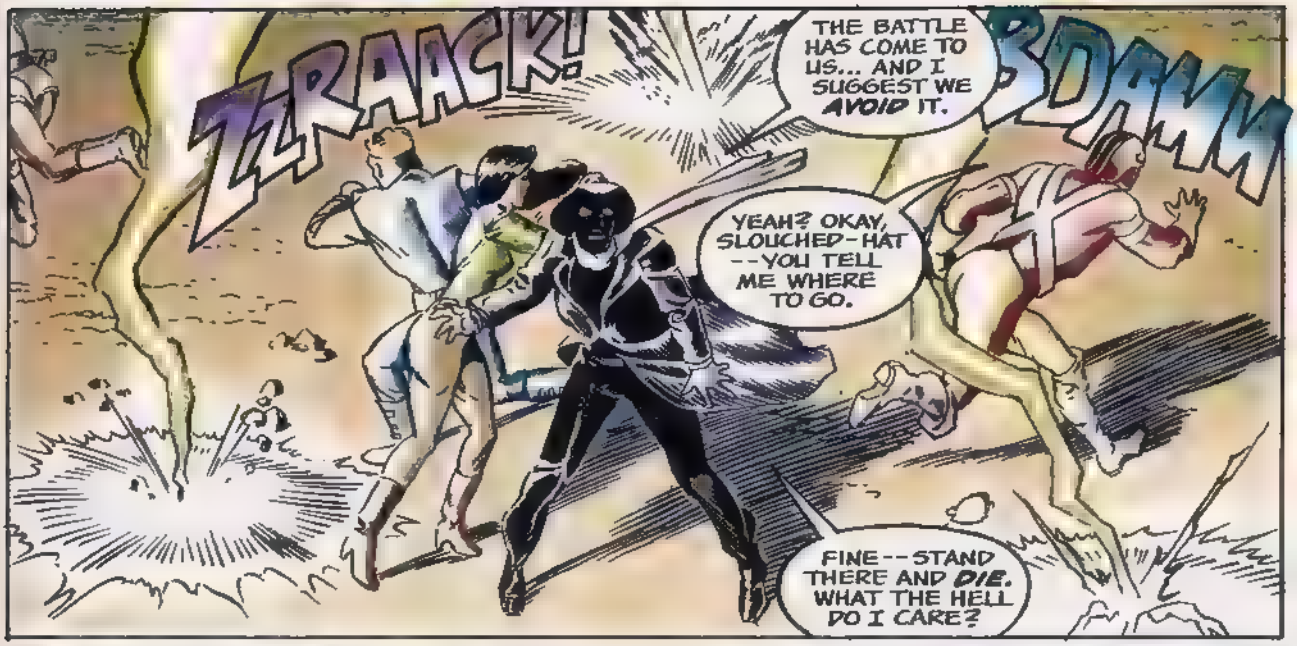

TIME AND SPACE ARE BEING DESTROYED.
THE FINAL CONFLAGRATION HAS BEGUN.
THIS HAS BEEN KROK'S PLAN ALL ALONG--
--TO DESTROY ALL TIME STREAMS BUT HIS OWN.


WE HAVEN'T GOT TIME TO WASTE.
HE'S HITTING EVERY ERA AT ONCE.
C'MON-- MOVE IT!

THEN COME WITH ME...
...OUR COMBINED POWER IS WHAT IS NEEDED NOW.


WE MUST STOP THE VERY FORCES WHICH I, IN MY FORMER EXISTENCE, BEGAN.
I WAS A FOOL TO HAVE BELIEVED THE VOICES...TO THINK I WAS LED ABOUT SO EASILY.
...
...SO CONVINCED OF MY PURPOSE.


I BUILT THOSE MACHINES TO DESTROY THE UNIVERSE.
WE MUST STOP THEM BEFORE I SUCCEED.

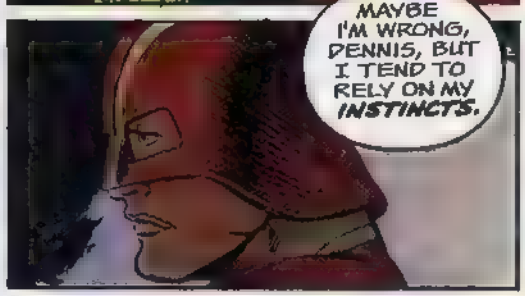

ZZRAACK!
THE BATTLE HAS COME TO US... AND I SUGGEST WE AVOID IT.
BDAMM
YEAH? OKAY, SLOUCHED-HAT --YOU TELL ME WHERE TO GO.
FINE--STAND THERE AND DIE. WHAT THE HELL DO I CARE?

GET BACK INTO THE TEMPLE ...WE NEED TO PROTECT OURSELVES.
FROM TIME GOING CRAZY?
VAL, THAT'S NOT MY KIND OF FIGHTING.

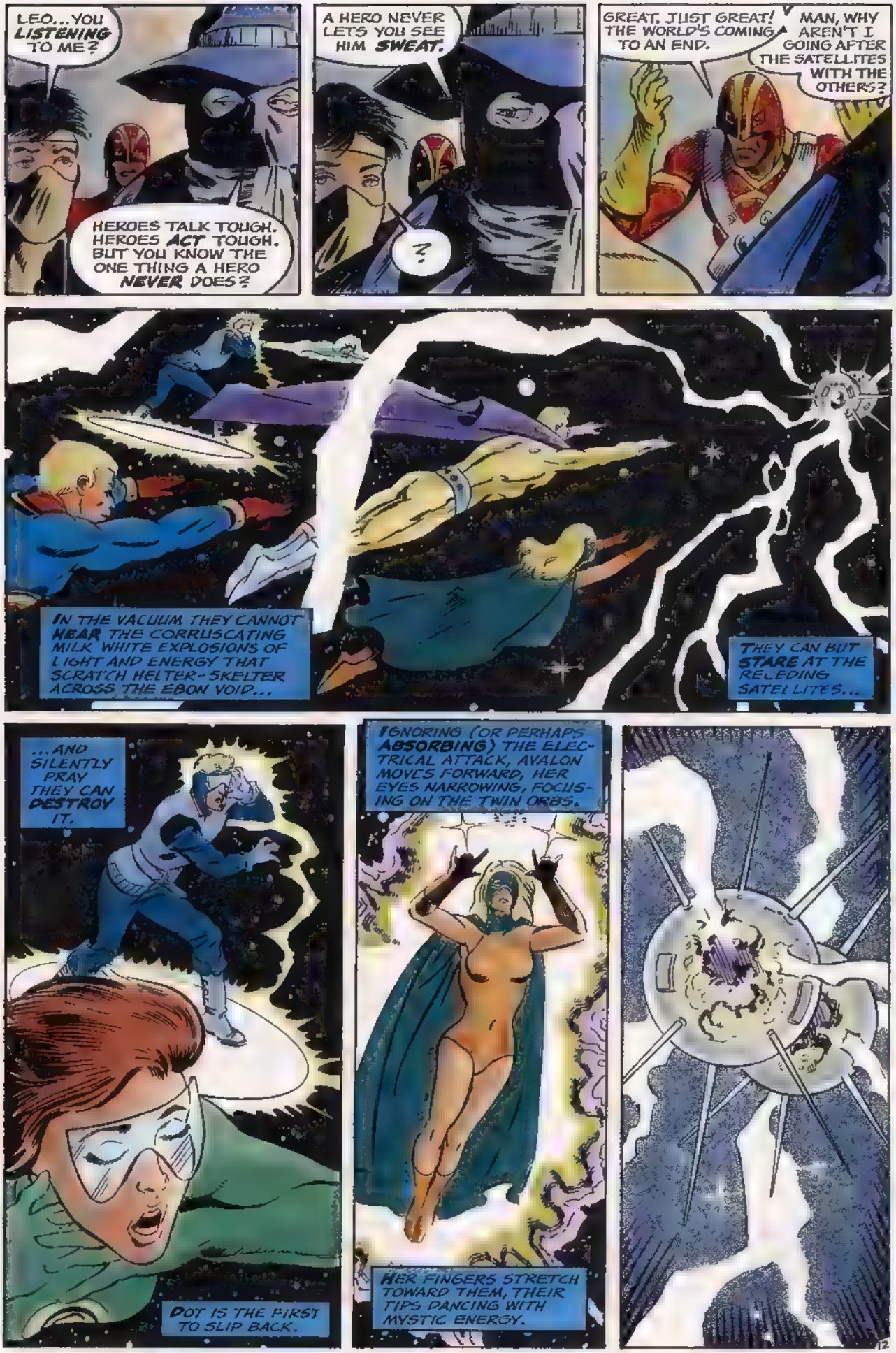
GIVE ME SOMETHING I CAN TOUCH AND I'LL DO MY DAMNED-EST TO STOP IT...
BUT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT TIME HERE.
HOW DO I BEAT UP THAT?
NOT A BAD QUESTION, NELSON.
WHO'S GOT ANSWERS?

NOBODY? JUST LIKE I THOUGHT. OKAY, THEN ANSWER ME THIS.
ADOLF HITLER COMES MARCHING INTO JERUSALEM AND SAYS, "I'M SORRY. MY MISTAKE. I WON'T DO IT ANY MORE."
WHY THE HELL SHOULD WE BELIEVE HIM? AND WHY THE HELL SHOULD WE BELIEVE DR. ZZED/ECLIPSE/BOZO OR WHATEVER THE HELL HE CALLS HIMSELF?

SOMETIMES YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE THINGS ON TRUST.


MAYBE I'M WRONG, DENNIS, BUT I TEND TO RELY ON MY INSTINCTS.

LEO, I DON'T LIKE THIS.
I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN HANDLE WHAT WE'RE DOING HERE.


LEO...YOU LISTENING TO ME?
HEROES TALK TOUGH. HEROES ACT TOUGH. BUT YOU KNOW THE ONE THING A HERO NEVER DOES?
A HERO NEVER LETS YOU SEE HIM SWEAT.
?
GREAT. JUST GREAT! THE WORLD'S COMING TO AN END.
MAN, WHY AREN'T I GOING AFTER THE SATELLITES WITH THE OTHERS?
IN THE VACUUM THEY CANNOT HEAR THE CORRUSCATING MILK WHITE EXPLOSIONS OF LIGHT AND ENERGY THAT SCRATCH HELTER-SKELTER ACROSS THE EBON VOID...
THEY CAN BUT STARE AT THE RECEDING SATELLITES...
...AND SILENTLY PRAY THEY CAN DESTROY IT.
DOT IS THE FIRST TO SLIP BACK.
IGNORING (OR PERHAPS ABSORBING) THE ELECTRICAL ATTACK, AVALON MOVES FORWARD, HER EYES NARROWING, FOCUSING ON THE TWIN ORBS.
HER FINGERS STRETCH TOWARD THEM, THEIR TIPS DANCING WITH MYSTIC ENERGY.
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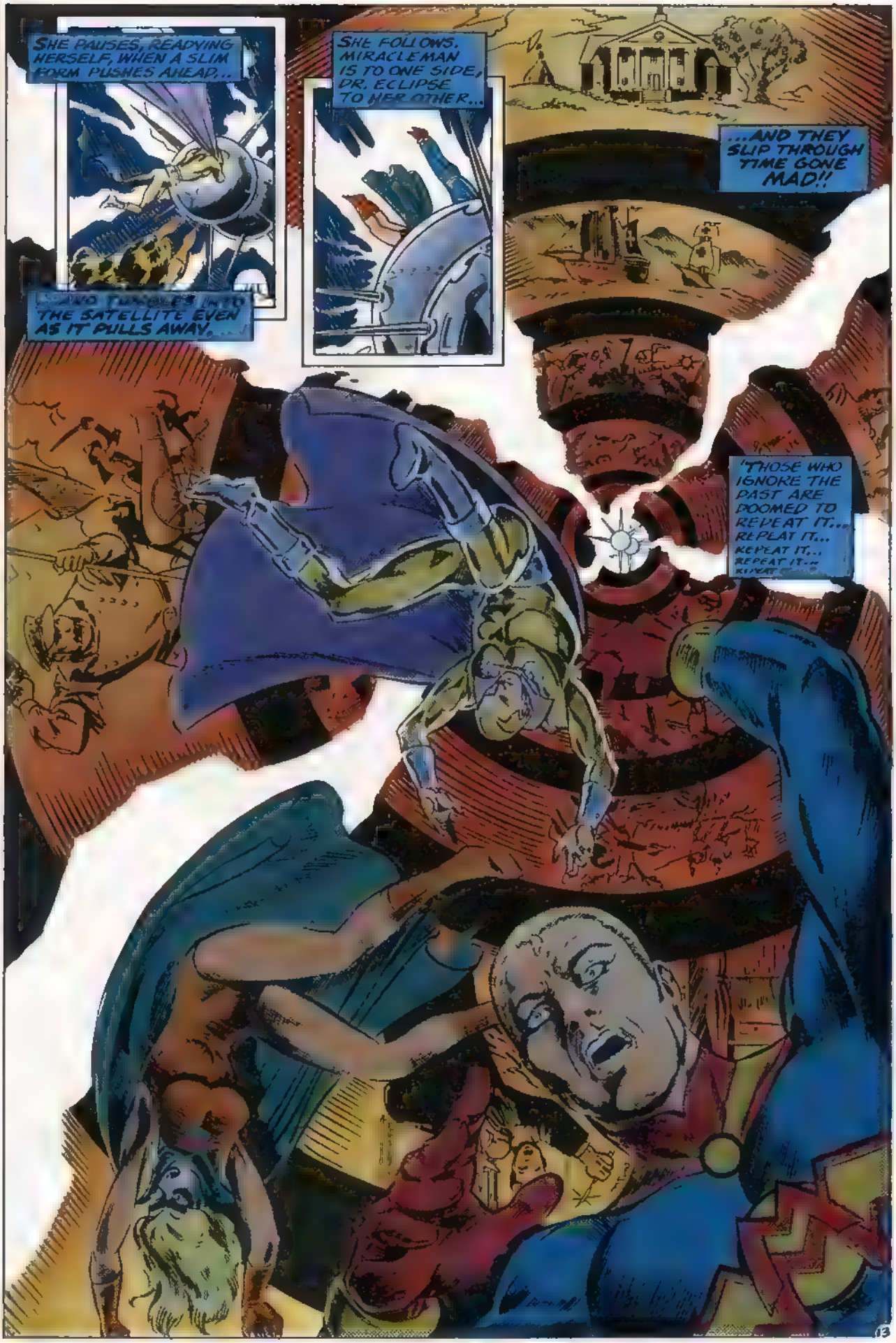
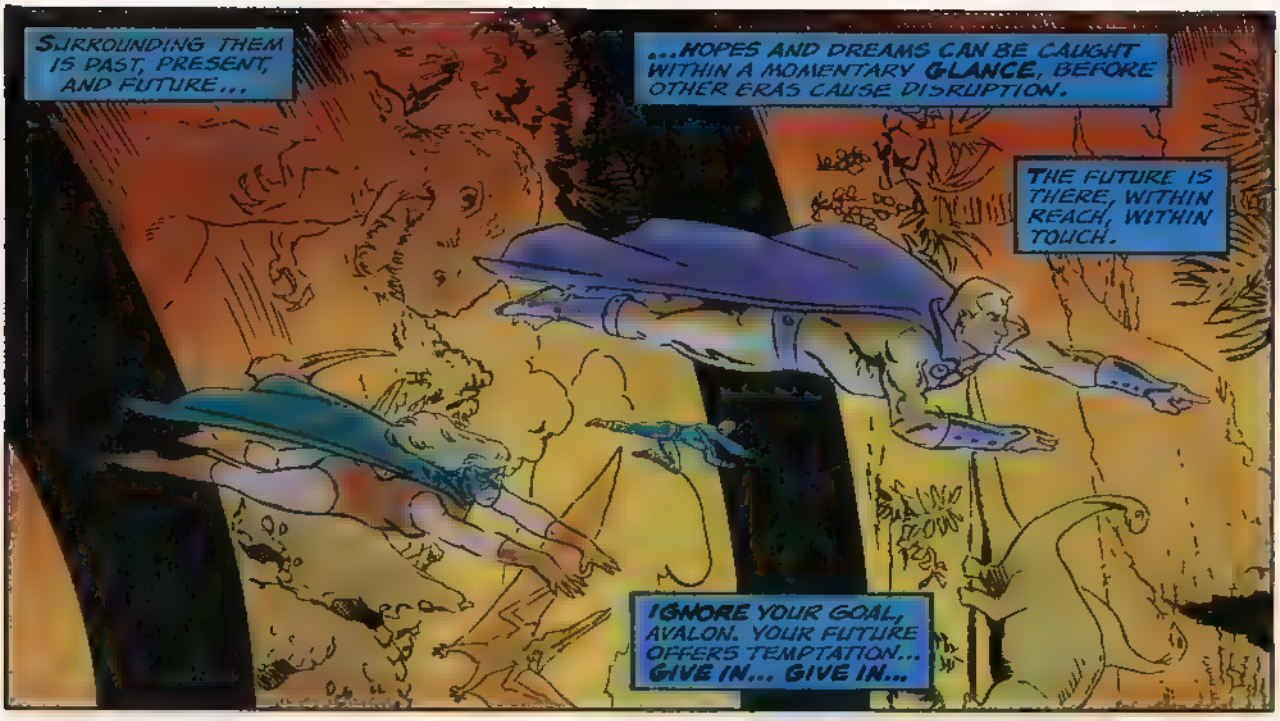
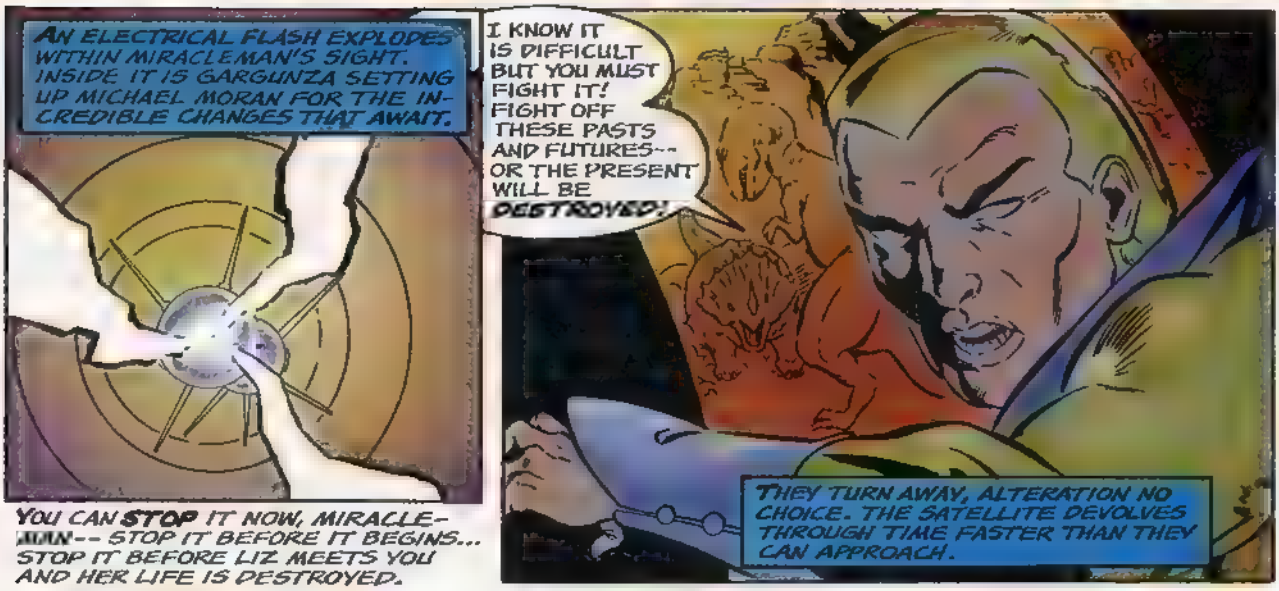
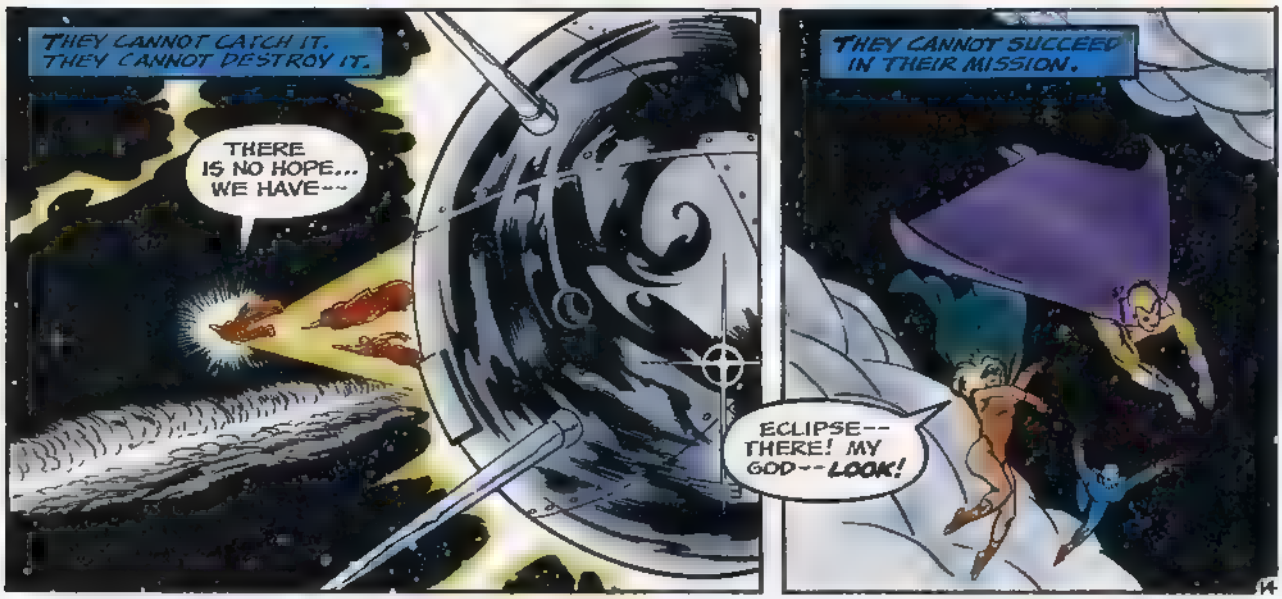

SHE PAUSES, READYING HERSELF, WHEN A SLIM FORM PUSHES AHEAD...
SHE FOLLOWS. MIRACLEMAN IS TO ONE SIDE, DR. ECLIPSE TO HER OTHER...
...AND THEY SLIP THROUGH TIME GONE MAD!!
...AND TUMBLE INTO THE SATELLITE EVEN AS IT PULLS AWAY...
'THOSE WHO IGNORE THE PAST ARE DOOMED TO REPEAT IT... REPLAT IT... REPEAT IT... REPEAT IT...


SURROUNDING THEM IS PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE...
...HOPES AND DREAMS CAN BE CAUGHT WITHIN A MOMENTARY GLANCE, BEFORE OTHER ERAS CAUSE DISRUPTION.
THE FUTURE IS THERE, WITHIN REACH, WITHIN TOUCH.
IGNORE YOUR GOAL, AVALON. YOUR FUTURE OFFERS TEMPTATION... GIVE IN... GIVE IN...


AN ELECTRICAL FLASH EXPLODES WITHIN MIRACLEMAN'S SIGHT. INSIDE IT IS GARGUNZA SETTING UP MICHAEL MORAN FOR THE INCREDIBLE CHANGES THAT AWAIT.
I KNOW IT IS DIFFICULT BUT YOU MUST FIGHT IT! FIGHT OFF THESE PASTS AND FUTURES-- OR THE PRESENT WILL BE DESTROYED!
THEY TURN AWAY, ALTERATION NO CHOICE. THE SATELLITE DEVOLVES THROUGH TIME FASTER THAN THEY CAN APPROACH.

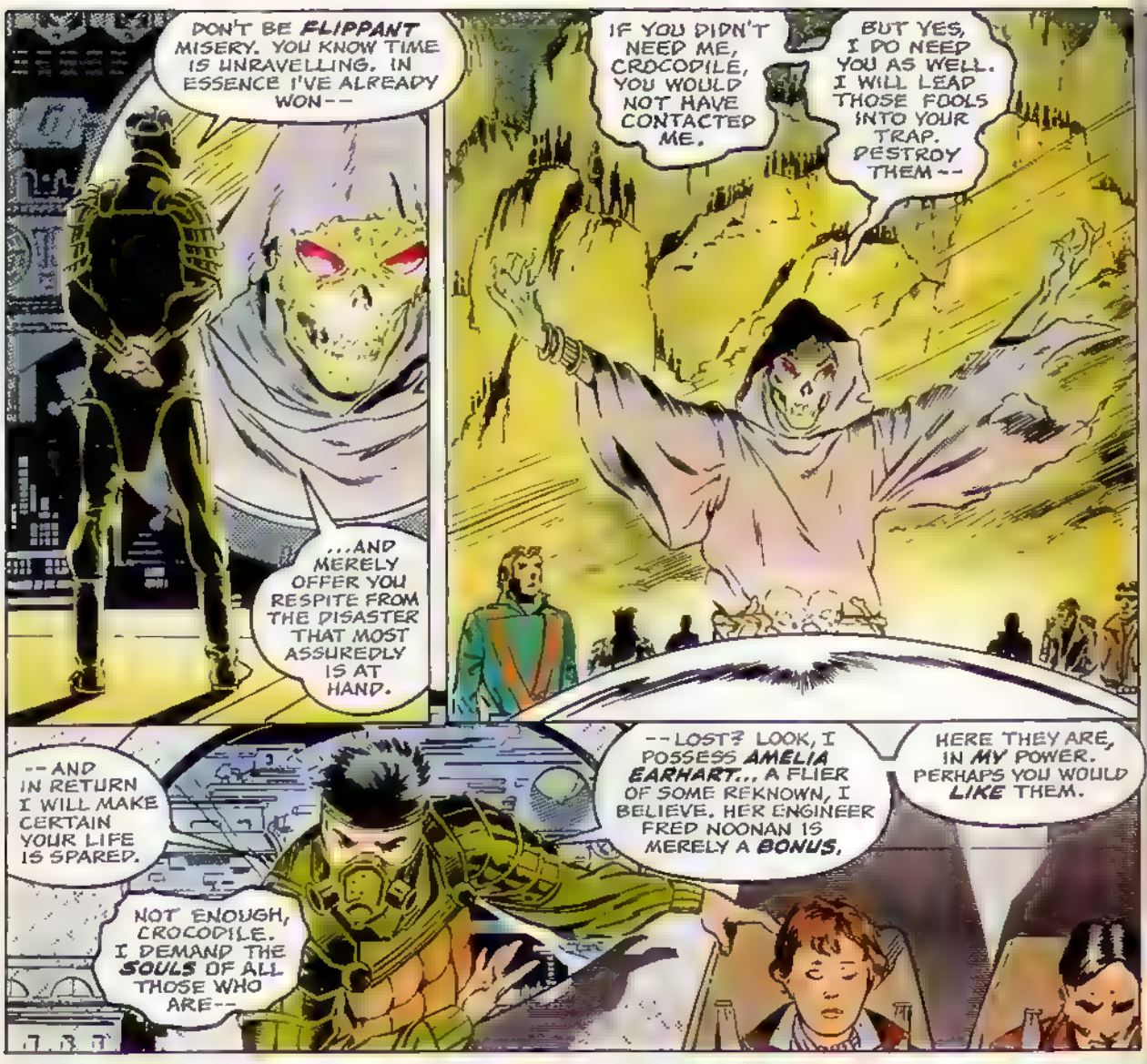
YOU CAN **STOP** IT NOW, MIRACLE-MAN-- STOP IT BEFORE IT BEGINS... STOP IT BEFORE LIZ MEETS YOU AND HER LIFE IS DESTROYED.

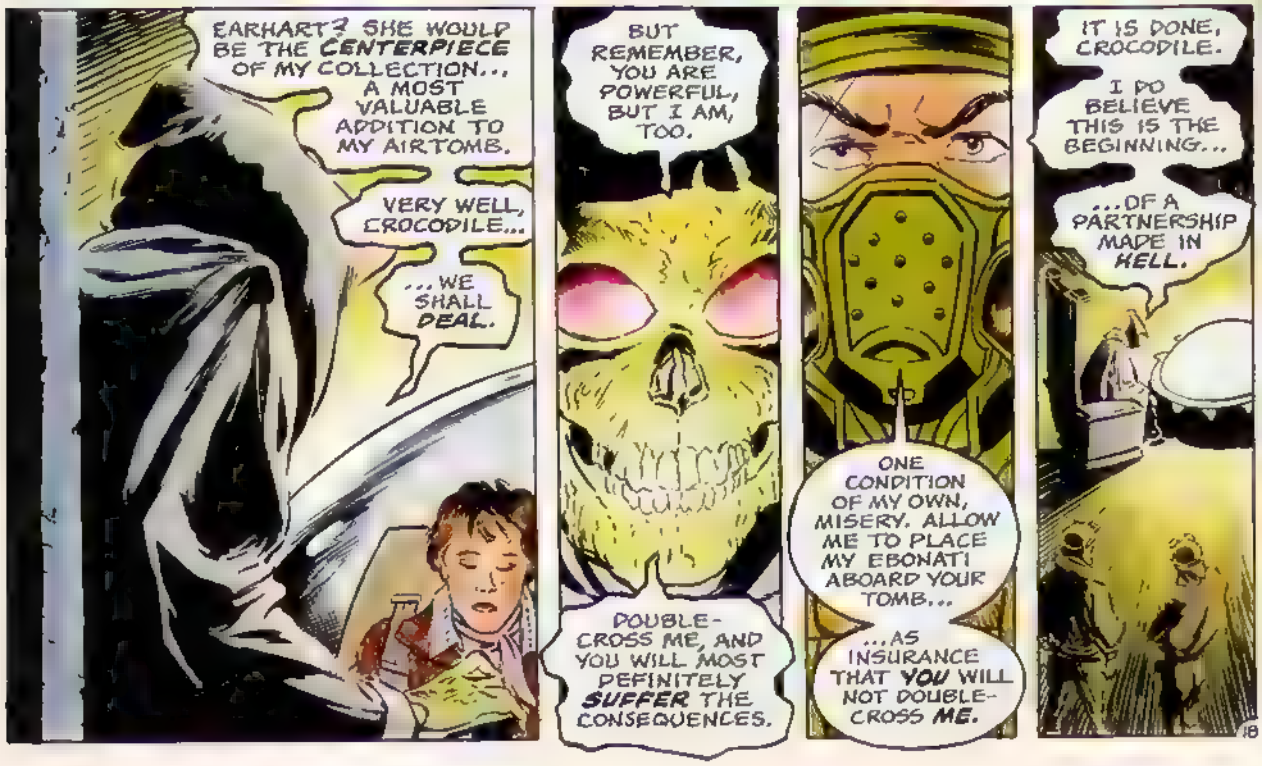

THEY CANNOT CATCH IT. THEY CANNOT DESTROY IT.
THERE IS NO HOPE... WE HAVE--
THEY CANNOT SUCCEED IN THEIR MISSION.
ECLIPSE-- THERE! MY GOD-- LOOK!

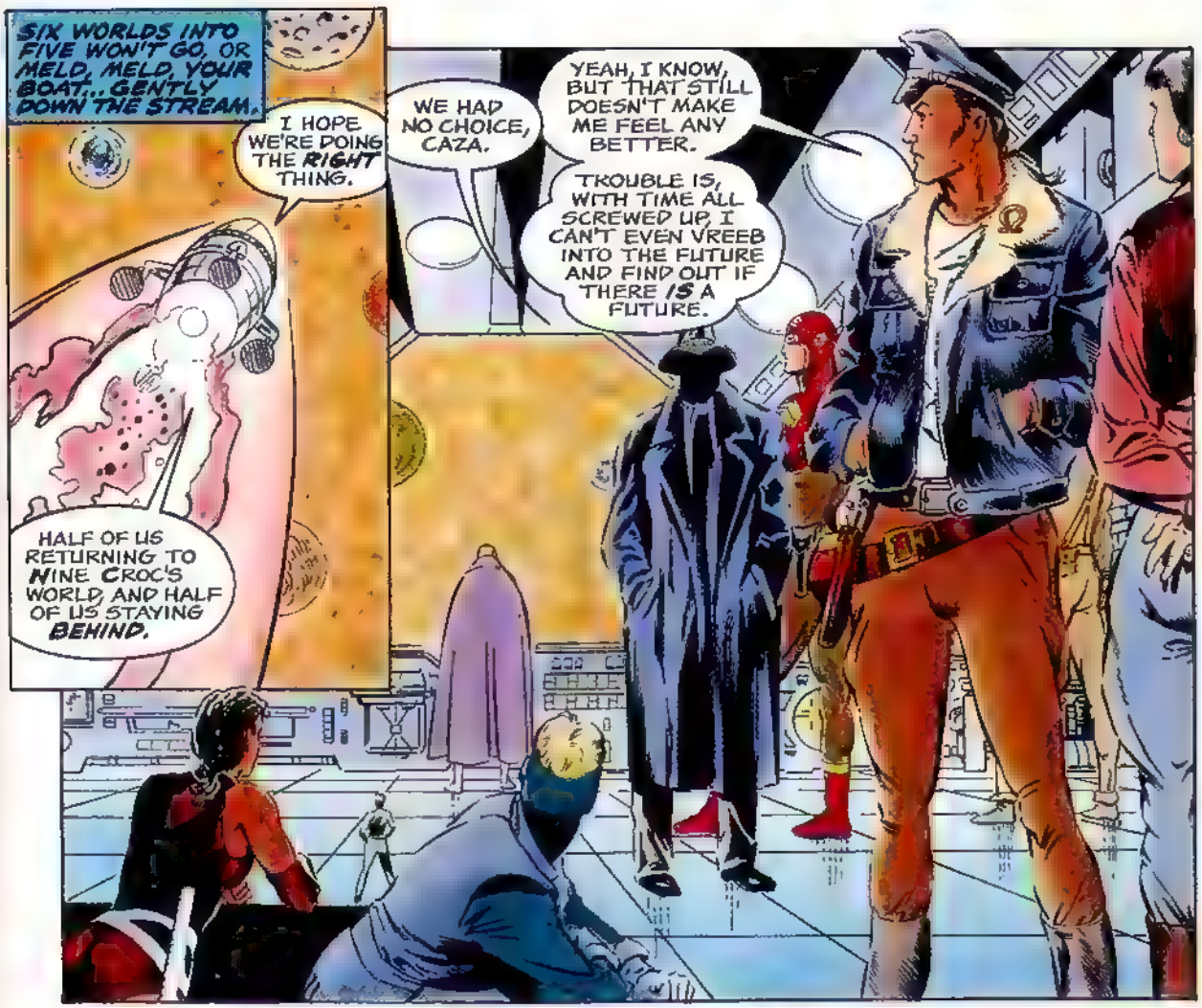
THE TIME ANOMOLIES ARE STRIKING EVERYWHERE!
I-IT'S TOO LATE!
KEEP THEM AWAY FROM THE GEM--
--AT LEAST UNTIL WE CAN GET TO IT.
THEN MOVE QUICKLY, BOY.
THERE ARE MORE OF THESE... THINGS THAN THERE ARE OF US.
SPEED IS OF THE ESSENCE.
MEGABYTE, YOU'RE A MASTER OF THE OBVIOUS.
BUT WHAT I WANNA KNOW IS--HOW THE HELL DO WE GET RID OF THEM?!
AND THEN HOW DO WE GET BACK AND BLOW NINE-CROCODILE FROM HERE TO HELL?

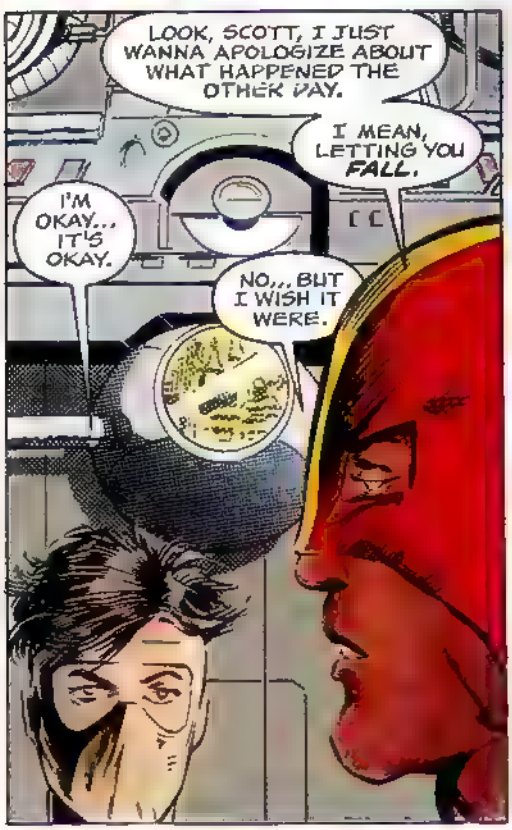
WHY DO THEY REFUSE TO SURRENDER? WHY DO THEY CONTINUE THEIR ONSLAUGHT--
--AND WHY DO I FEAR THEIR SUCCESS MORE THAN EVER BEFORE?
ENOUGH! THE RISK OF FAILURE CREATES AN EDGE... ONE I MUST RELINQUISH UNTIL SUCCESS IS GUARANTEED.
THEY'VE SUCCEEDED IN CREATING DELAYS, BUT THEY FAIL IN THEIR ULTIMATE GOAL.
THAT SHOULD BE ENOUGH!
STILL-- I NEED TO MAKE THEIR FAILURE CERTAIN.
YOU STAND THERE LISTENING IN SILENCE, WAITING FOR ME TO SPOUT WORDS OF WISDOM.
WHY DO I SURROUND MYSELF WITH FOOLS?
AHH, WELL-- SUCH ERRORS WILL NOT CONTINUE ONCE FINAL SUCCESS IS MINE...
"I NEED... MISERY!
"...THE SO-CALLED HEROES MUST BE ELIMINATED BEFORE THEY CAN FURTHER DELAY ME.
"YES... IT MAY BE WISE TO MAKE AN ALLIANCE."

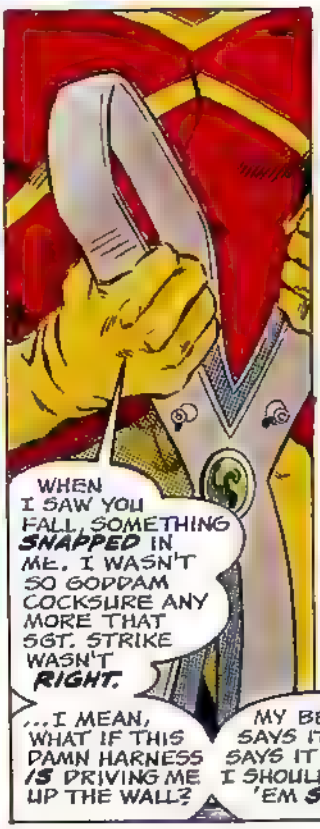
I ALLY MYSELF WITH FOOLS. THEY WILL SEE ME DESTROYED BECAUSE THEY ARE INCAPABLE OF IMPLEMENTING THEIR TRUE POWER.
CITING MORALITY, THEY REFUSE TO ACCEPT THEIR RIGHTFUL PLACES AS LEADERS OF MEN.
AND BECAUSE OF ALL THAT, THEY WILL PROVE EASY TO DEFEAT ONCE THIS ALL TOO TEMPORARY ALLIANCE IS OVER.
MISERY... MISERY...
WHO DARES SPEAK--?
YOU?!?
HEAR ME OUT, MISERY. WE HAVE BEEN AWARE OF EACH OTHER FOR... MANY YEARS.
MANY YEARS. AND I AM AWARE THAT YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INSANITY WHICH MAY DESTROY ME.
TRUE... WHICH IS WHY AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN US IS MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL.
THOSE FOOLS ARE NOT YOUR FRIENDS...OR YOUR EQUALS. INDEED, WE BOTH SEEK THEIR DESTRUCTION.
TOGETHER WE CAN ASSURE THAT PLEASANT FATE WHILE INSURING US THE POWER WE DEMAND.
GO ON, CROCODILE.
I WILL LISTEN AWHILE LONGER.
AS LONG AS YOU... AMUSE ME.
17


DON'T BE FLIPPANT MISERY. YOU KNOW TIME IS UNRAVELLING. IN ESSENCE I'VE ALREADY WON--
...AND MERELY OFFER YOU RESPITE FROM THE DISASTER THAT MOST ASSUREDLY IS AT HAND.
IF YOU DIDN'T NEED ME, CROCODILE, YOU WOULD NOT HAVE CONTACTED ME.
BUT YES, I DO NEED YOU AS WELL. I WILL LEAD THOSE FOOLS INTO YOUR TRAP. DESTROY THEM--
--AND IN RETURN I WILL MAKE CERTAIN YOUR LIFE IS SPARED.
NOT ENOUGH, CROCODILE. I DEMAND THE SOULS OF ALL THOSE WHO ARE--
--LOST? LOOK, I POSSESS AMELIA EARHART.., A FLIER OF SOME REKNOWN, I BELIEVE. HER ENGINEER FRED NOONAN IS MERELY A BONUS.
HERE THEY ARE, IN MY POWER. PERHAPS YOU WOULD LIKE THEM.


EARHART? SHE WOULD BE THE CENTERPIECE OF MY COLLECTION.., A MOST VALUABLE ADDITION TO MY AIRTOMB.
VERY WELL, CROCODILE...
...WE SHALL DEAL.
BUT REMEMBER, YOU ARE POWERFUL, BUT I AM, TOO.
DOUBLE-CROSS ME, AND YOU WILL MOST DEFINITELY SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES.
ONE CONDITION OF MY OWN, MISERY. ALLOW ME TO PLACE MY EBONATI ABOARD YOUR TOMB...
...AS INSURANCE THAT YOU WILL NOT DOUBLE-CROSS ME.
IT IS DONE, CROCODILE.
I DO BELIEVE THIS IS THE BEGINNING...
...OF A PARTNERSHIP MADE IN HELL.

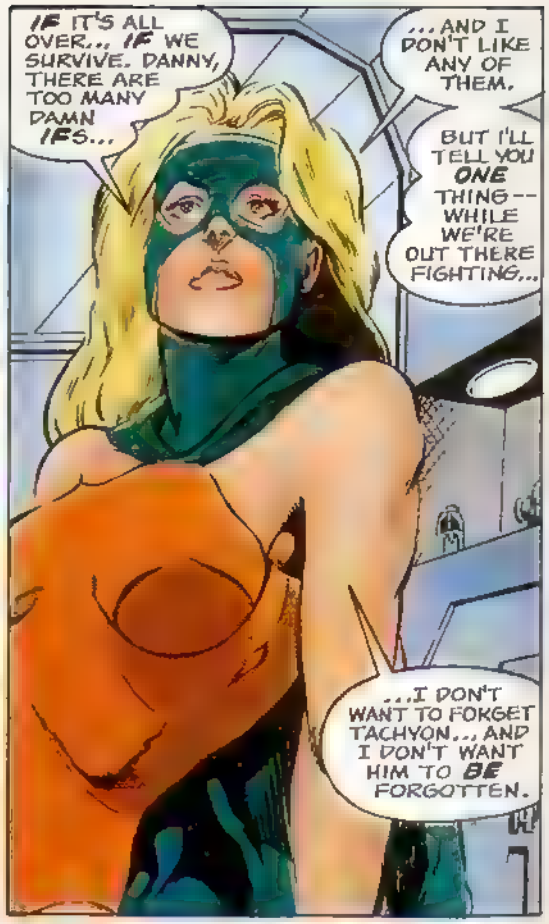

SIX WORLDS INTO FIVE WON'T GO, OR MELD, MELD, YOUR BOAT... GENTLY DOWN THE STREAM.
I HOPE WE'RE DOING THE RIGHT THING.
HALF OF US RETURNING TO NINE CROC'S WORLD, AND HALF OF US STAYING BEHIND.
WE HAD NO CHOICE, CAZA.
YEAH, I KNOW, BUT THAT STILL DOESN'T MAKE ME FEEL ANY BETTER.
TROUBLE IS, WITH TIME ALL SCREWED UP, I CAN'T EVEN VREEB INTO THE FUTURE AND FIND OUT IF THERE IS A FUTURE.


LOOK, SCOTT, I JUST WANNA APOLOGIZE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED THE OTHER DAY.
I MEAN, LETTING YOU FALL.
I'M OKAY... IT'S OKAY.
NO... BUT I WISH IT WERE.


WHEN I SAW YOU FALL, SOMETHING SNAPPED IN ME. I WASN'T SO GODDAM COCKSURE ANY MORE THAT SGT. STRIKE WASN'T RIGHT.
...I MEAN, WHAT IF THIS DAMN HARNESS IS DRIVING ME UP THE WALL?
MY BEST FRIEND SAYS IT IS. SARGE SAYS IT IS, SO MAYBE I SHOULD START TAKING 'EM SERIOUSLY.

ANYWAY, I JUST WANTED TO APOLOGIZE... TO LET YOU KNOW YOU CAN DAMN WELL COUNT ON ME IN THE FUTURE.
OKAY?
SURE... NO PROBLEM.

GOD, WE LOSE TACHYON AND NOBODY SEEMS TO CARE OR THINK ABOUT HIM.
LIZZIE, THEY'RE DOING THE BEST THEY CAN.
WE'RE ALL CAUGHT IN A SITUATION I DON'T THINK ANY OF US CAN HONESTLY REFLECT ON UNTIL THIS IS ALL OVER.


IF IT'S ALL OVER... IF WE SURVIVE. DANNY, THERE ARE TOO MANY DAMN IFS...
...AND I DON'T LIKE ANY OF THEM.
BUT I'LL TELL YOU ONE THING -- WHILE WE'RE OUT THERE FIGHTING...
...I DON'T WANT TO FORGET TACHYON... AND I DON'T WANT HIM TO BE FORGOTTEN.

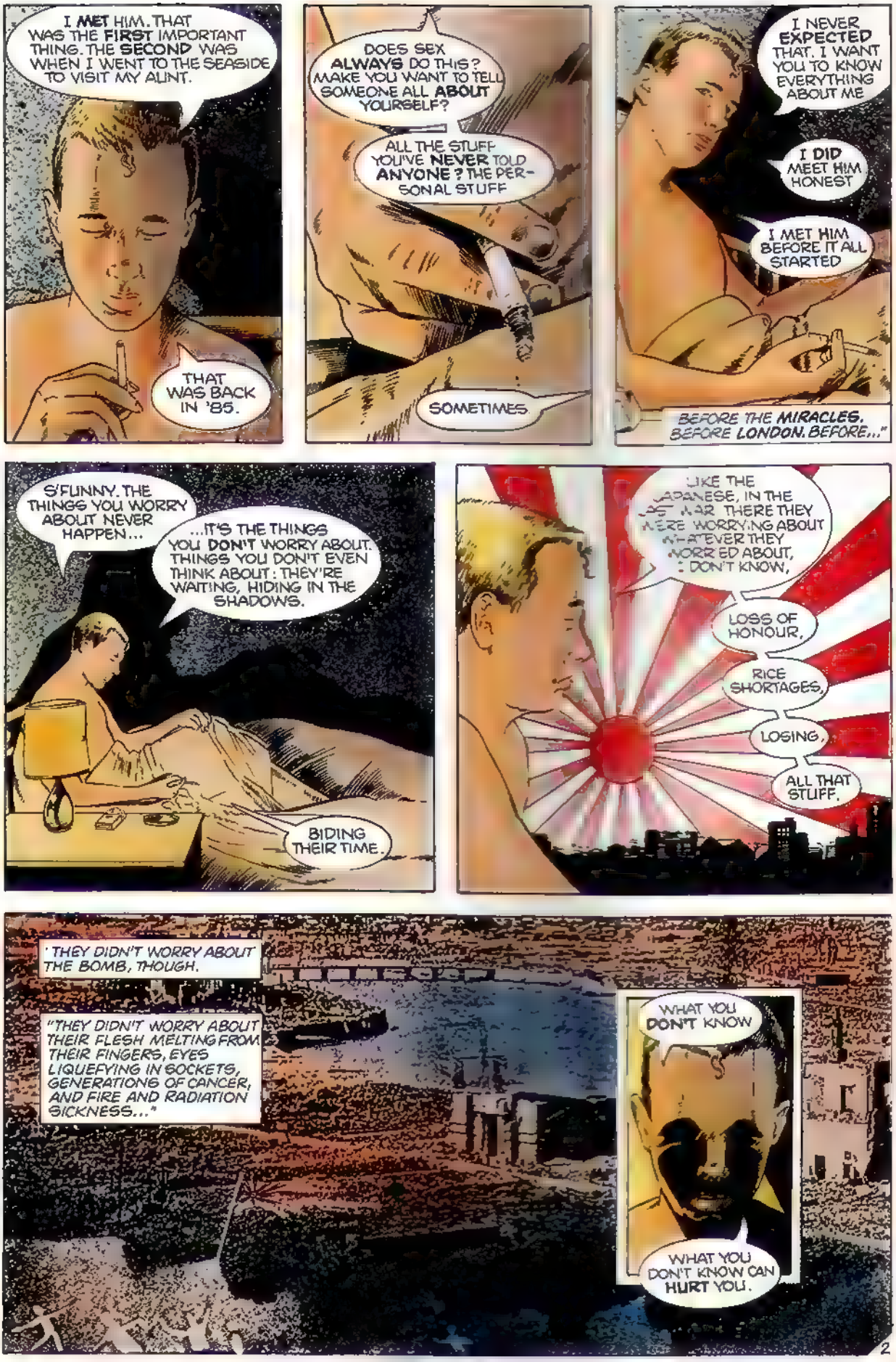
THEY'RE TIRED OF WAITING AROUND... TIRED OF DOING NOTHING. WE'VE GOT TO MOVE.
WHAT DO YOU THINK I'VE BEEN DOING HERE? PLAYING GAMES?
FROM THE TOYS 'R' US EIGHT-BALL IN YOUR HAND, I'D PROBABLY GIVE AN ANSWER YOU WOULDN'T LIKE.

I AM LOOKING FOR A QUIET PLACE...
...A CONTEMPLATIVE PLACE.
WE COULD ALL USE THAT NOW.
YEAH... I'VE GOT JUST THE PLACE FOR MARKING TIME. C'MON WITH ME.

ENJOY.
THAT ISN'T THE PURPOSE.
OKAY. HATE EVERY SECOND. WHATEVER TURNS YOU ON.
AND WHILE MIRACLEMAN BROODS ON THE EVENTS OF PAST HOURS, HIS OWN WORLD IS ALSO AWASH IN DREAMS AND MEMORIES.

Interlude:

MIRACLEMAN
THANK YOU
THANK YOU, THAT WAS BEAUTIFUL.
HANG ON A SEC
YAHOOO!
WHAT WAS THAT FOR?
I'VE BEEN DREAMING ABOUT DOING THIS FOR THE LAST FIVE YEARS! MY FIRST CIGARETTE AFTER SEX!
...DON'T LAUGH.
I WASN'T LAUGHING, JASON. I THINK YOU'RE GREAT.
WELL, I THINK YOU'RE, I DUNNO. ULTRA MAGNIFICENT. I WAS SCARED THE FIRST TIME WOULD BE A DISAPPOINTMENT...
"THAT'S THE THIRD IMPORTANT THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TO ME. I'VE BEEN COUNTING."
SCREAMING
NEIL GAIMAN - WRITER
MARK BUCKINGHAM - ARTIST
ELITTA FELL - LETTERER
SAM PARSONS - COLORIST
FRED BURKE - EDITOR


I MET HIM. THAT WAS THE FIRST IMPORTANT THING. THE SECOND WAS WHEN I WENT TO THE SEASIDE TO VISIT MY AUNT.
THAT WAS BACK IN '85.
DOES SEX ALWAYS DO THIS? MAKE YOU WANT TO TELL SOMEONE ALL ABOUT YOURSELF?
ALL THE STUFF YOU'VE NEVER TOLD ANYONE? THE PERSONAL STUFF
SOMETIMES
I NEVER EXPECTED THAT. I WANT YOU TO KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT ME
I DID MEET HIM HONEST
I MET HIM BEFORE IT ALL STARTED
BEFORE THE MIRACLES. BEFORE LONDON. BEFORE..."
S'FUNNY. THE THINGS YOU WORRY ABOUT NEVER HAPPEN...
...IT'S THE THINGS YOU DON'T WORRY ABOUT. THINGS YOU DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT: THEY'RE WAITING, HIDING IN THE SHADOWS.
BIDING THEIR TIME.
LIKE THE JAPANESE, IN THE LAST WAR. THEY WERE WORRYING ABOUT WHATEVER THEY WORRIED ABOUT, I DON'T KNOW,
LOSS OF HONOUR,
RICE SHORTAGES,
LOSING,
ALL THAT STUFF.
'THEY DIDN'T WORRY ABOUT THE BOMB, THOUGH.
"THEY DIDN'T WORRY ABOUT THEIR FLESH MELTING FROM THEIR FINGERS, EYES LIQUEFYING IN SOCKETS, GENERATIONS OF CANCER, AND FIRE AND RADIATION SICKNESS..."
WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW
WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW CAN HURT YOU.

THESE DAYS WE DON'T WORRY ABOUT MUCH
BATES IS DEAD, AND THE BOMBS HAVE GONE AND THE AGE OF MIRACLES IS HERE.
MU-UM! I'VE MADE PLANS! ME AND GARRY AND DAVE AND SHARON ARE GOING INTO LONDON THIS WEEKEND! I TOL' YOU! I TOL' YOU AGES AGO!
JASON, I TOLD YOU AGES AGO THAT YOU AND STEPHANIE WERE GOING TO STAY WITH YOUR AUNT MILLIE.
YOU KNOW HOW MUCH SHE WANTS TO SEE YOU...
"STEPHANIE: A YEAR YOUNGER THAN ME AND A PAIN. INTERESTS: DURAN DURAN AND/OR A-HA. HOBBIES. DROPPING ME IN IT
"AUNT MILLIE SORT OF LIKE A BATTLESHIP WITH A HANDBAG
"INTERESTS: HOSPITALS AND PORRIDGE. HOBBIES. TALKING ABOUT HOSPITALS AND FEEDING INNOCENT PEOPLE PORRIDGE"
SHE KEPT MY LATE UNCLE EDWIN'S GALLSTONES IN A JAR ON THE MANTELPIECE. HONEST.
FRANKLY, MUM, I'D RATHER DIE IN 'ORRIBLE AGONY!

GARRY WATTS WAS MY BEST FRIEND.
WE'D ALL GO INTO LONDON TOGETHER, HANG AROUND THE WEST END
SHARON USED TO SHOPLIFT A LOT. SHE WAS DEAD GOOD AT IT SAID IT WAS A CHALLENGE, LIKE BIG GAME HUNTING. SHE WAS DAVE'S GIRL-FRIEND.
"ME AND GARRY WOULD CHECK OUT THE MARKETS, HUNTING FOR GOOD STUFF BOOTLEG RECORDS. RARITIES.
"GARRY GOT A COPY OF 'THE MAN WHO SOLD THE WORLD' WITH THE BOWIE-IN-A-DRESS COVER. MUST HAVE BEEN WORTH 100 QUID.
'HE GOT IT FOR THREE POUNDS FIFTY.
"ANYWAY, I GOT SENT TO HAWKING-ON-SEA WITH BLOODY STEPHANIE
"THE MOST BORING PLACE IN CREATION I COULD HAVE SCREAMED.
"BREAKFAST WAS PORRIDGE EIGHT O'CLOCK. FROM NINE UNTIL FOUR WE HAD TO BE OUT OF THE HOUSE WE HAD TO BE BACK BY FOUR, FOR TEA.
"THEY'D ALL BE THERE I COULD NEVER REMEMBER THEIR NAMES.
"RIPPING INTO THEIR OATMEAL BISCUITS LIKE SEAGULLS PICKING APART A DEAD SEAL.
WASN'T HE CREEPY?
DOESN'T HE LOOK LIKE HIS DAD?
YOU REMEMBER ME, LOVE?
DOESN'T HE LOOK LIKE HIS MOTHER?
I NEVER CARED FOR THAT SIDE OF THE FAMILY.
WASN'T HE GROWN?

"THEY'D GO **ON** AND **ON** AND **ON** ABOUT WHOEVER WAS IN HOSPITAL THAT WEEK WITH HER LEG OR INSIDES

"THEY'D MAKE A FUSS OF STEPHANIE, AND THEY'D IGNORE ME

"AND STEPHANIE MADE FRIENDS WITH THE GIRL NEXT DOOR, SO THEY'D GO OFF AND TALK ABOUT SIMON LE BON, AND I'D BE LEFT TO ENJOY MYSELF ON THE SEAFRONT

"YOU COULDN'T **DO** MUCH.

"THERE WAS AN OLD PIER THAT WAS CLOSED OFF UNDER RECONSTRUCTION

"IT HAD BEEN UNDER RECONSTRUCTION SINCE 1973.

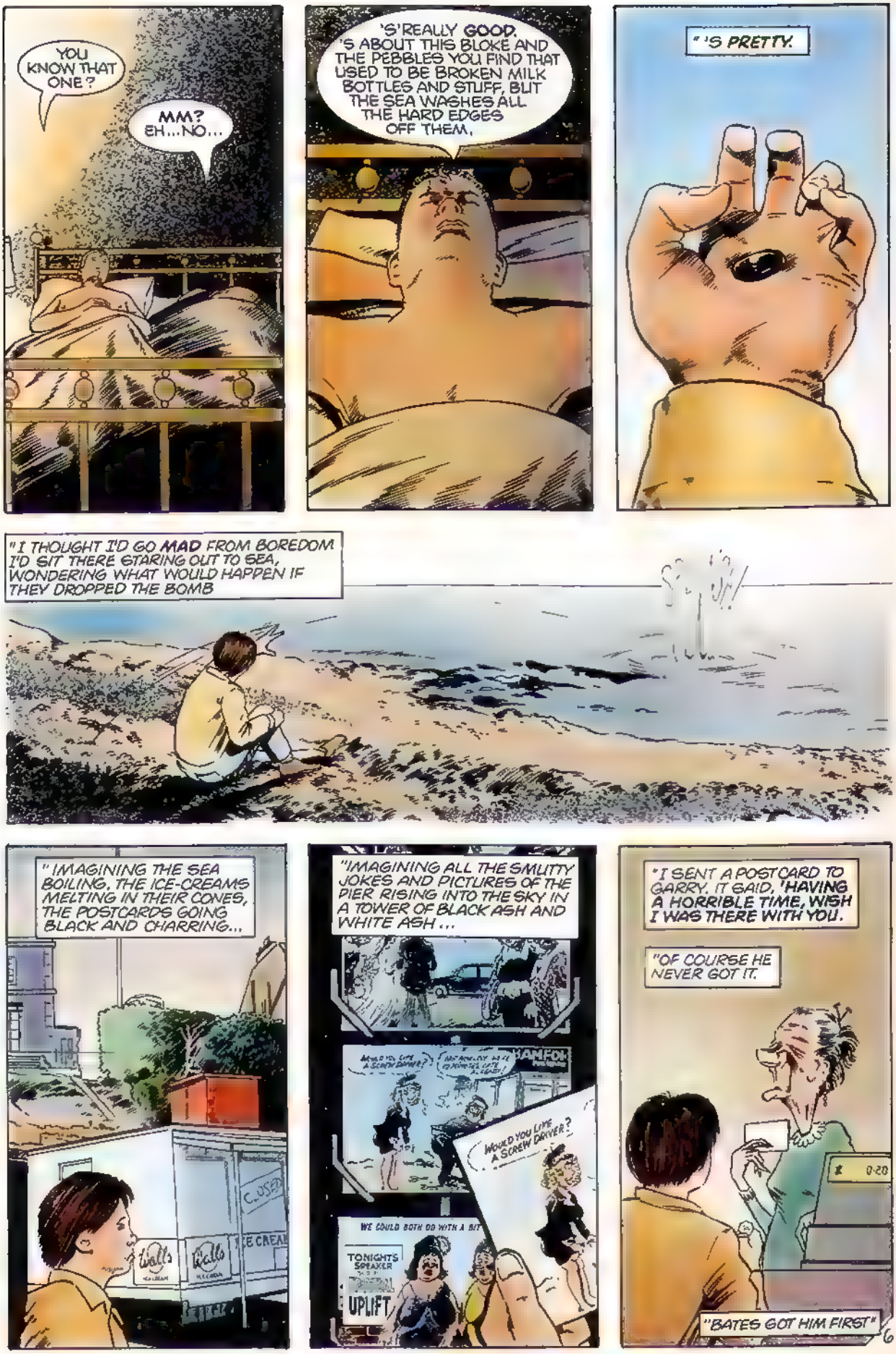
"THERE WERE HORRIBLE GIFT SHOPS.

KISS-ME-QUICK

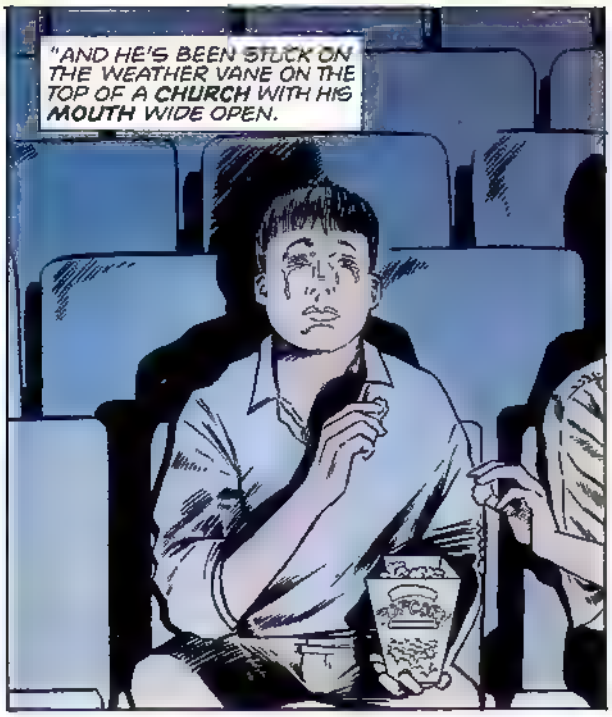
"THEY SOLD SWEETS THAT LOOKED LIKE PEBBLES, **KISS-ME-QUICK** HATS, AND STICKS OF ROCK WITH **'HAWKING-ON-SEA'** THROUGH THE MIDDLE.

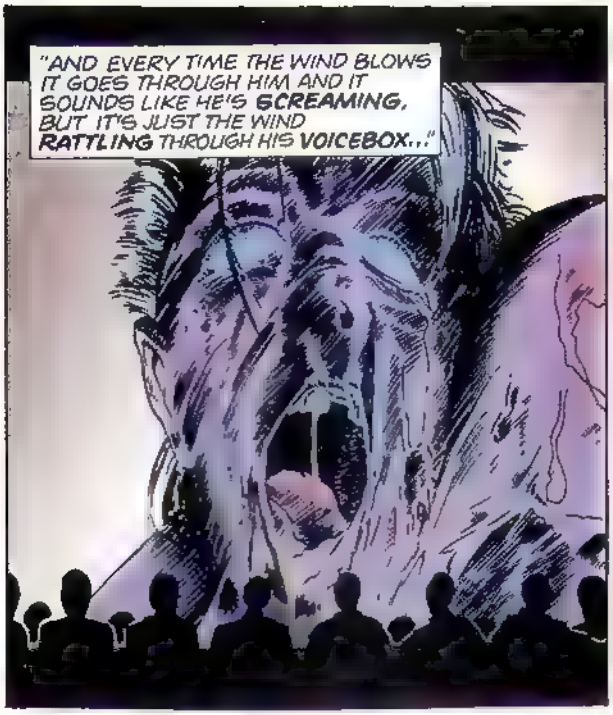
"THE SKIES WERE GREY AND TIRED, AND THE SEA WAS A MUDDY BROWN, AND THE BEACHES WERE JUST PEBBLES

"I'D WALK UP AND DOWN THEM, LISTENING TO THE SCREAMS OF THE SEAGULLS AND LOOKING FOR DRIFTGLASS, LIKE IN THE DELANEY STORY."


YOU KNOW THAT ONE?
MM? EH...NO...
'S' REALLY GOOD. 'S ABOUT THIS BLOKE AND THE PEBBLES YOU FIND THAT USED TO BE BROKEN MILK BOTTLES AND STUFF, BUT THE SEA WASHES ALL THE HARD EDGES OFF THEM.
"'S PRETTY.
"I THOUGHT I'D GO MAD FROM BOREDOM I'D SIT THERE STARING OUT TO SEA, WONDERING WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THEY DROPPED THE BOMB
"IMAGINING THE SEA BOILING, THE ICE-CREAMS MELTING IN THEIR CONES, THE POSTCARDS GOING BLACK AND CHARRING...
"IMAGINING ALL THE SMUTTY JOKES AND PICTURES OF THE PIER RISING INTO THE SKY IN A TOWER OF BLACK ASH AND WHITE ASH...
WOULD YOU LIKE A SCREW DRIVER?
WE COULD BOTH DO WITH A BIT
TONIGHTS SPEAKER
UPLIFT
"I SENT A POSTCARD TO GARRY. IT SAID, 'HAVING A HORRIBLE TIME, WISH I WAS THERE WITH YOU.
"OF COURSE HE NEVER GOT IT.
"BATES GOT HIM FIRST"

WHERE WERE YOU WHEN LONDON HAPPENED?
HNH? IN NEPAL, OF COURSE.
OH, YEAH. I SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT. SORRY.
I OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN IN LONDON. I OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN WITH THEM.
I WONDER WHAT IT WAS LIKE...
...THEY NEVER IDENTIFIED SHARON AND DAVE, I THINK ABOUT THEM.
THEY COULD HAVE BEEN PART OF THE MESS IN OXFORD STREET. YOU KNOW, ALL THE BITS.
WHEN HE WAS JUST DRAGGING PEOPLE UP IN THE SKY AND DROPPING THEM.
"MAYBE THEIR GUTS FORMED PART OF THE ROPE HE MADE AROUND CENTRE POINT. MAYBE.
"I DUNNO."
I KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO GARRY, THOUGH
YOU SAW THE KUBRICK MOVIE, 'VENEER'? WITH ALL THE DOCUMENTARY FOOTAGE?
MM.
"THERE'S A SCENE IN THAT, JUST AFTER THE CHESSBOARD OF BREASTS, WHEN YOU SEE THIS YOUNG GUY.
"AND HE'S BEEN CUT DOWN THE MIDDLE, AND HIS INSIDES HAVE BEEN RIPPED OUT...


"AND HE'S BEEN STUCK ON THE WEATHER VANE ON THE TOP OF A CHURCH WITH HIS MOUTH WIDE OPEN.

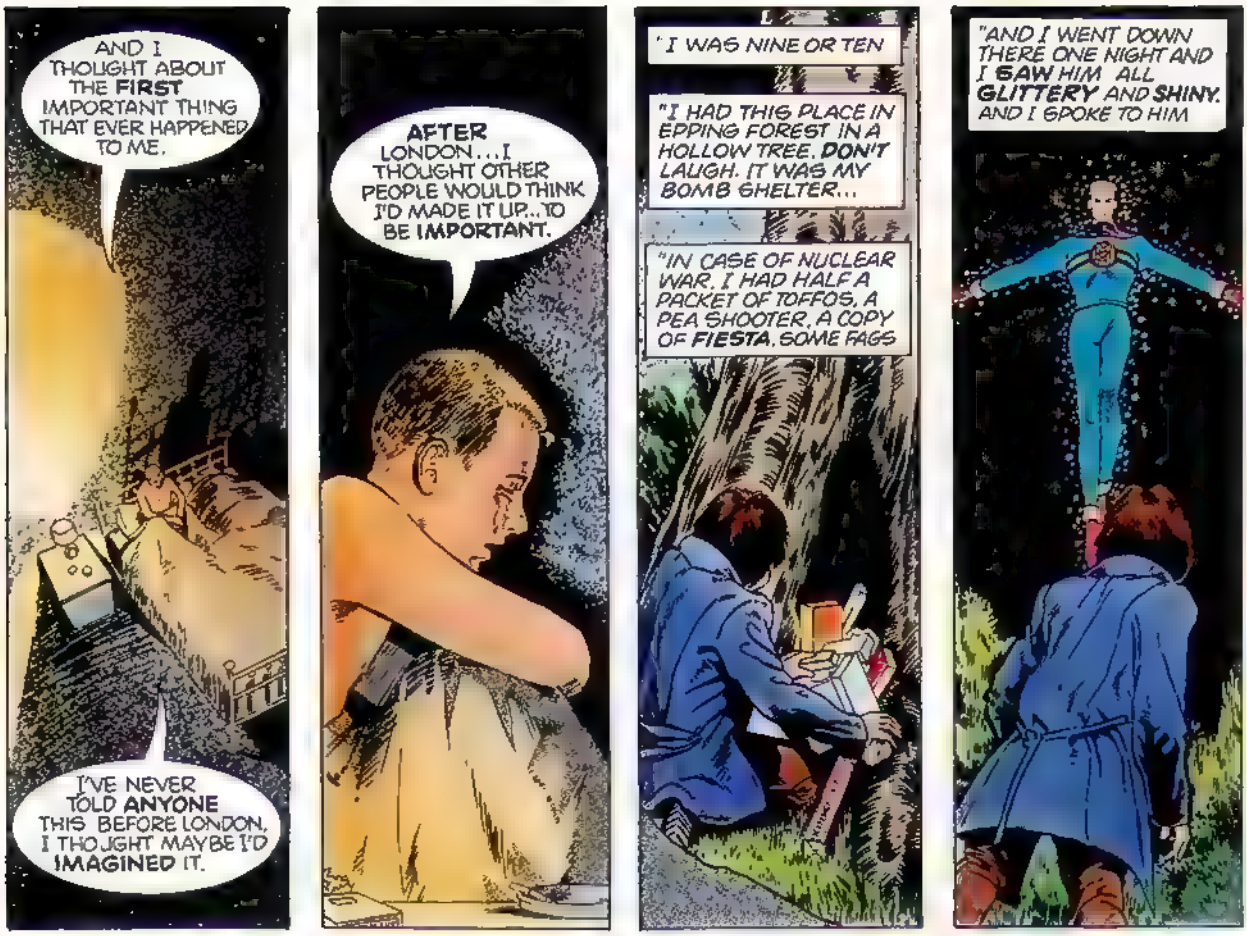

"AND EVERY TIME THE WIND BLOWS IT GOES THROUGH HIM AND IT SOUNDS LIKE HE'S SCREAMING, BUT IT'S JUST THE WIND RATTLING THROUGH HIS VOICEBOX..."

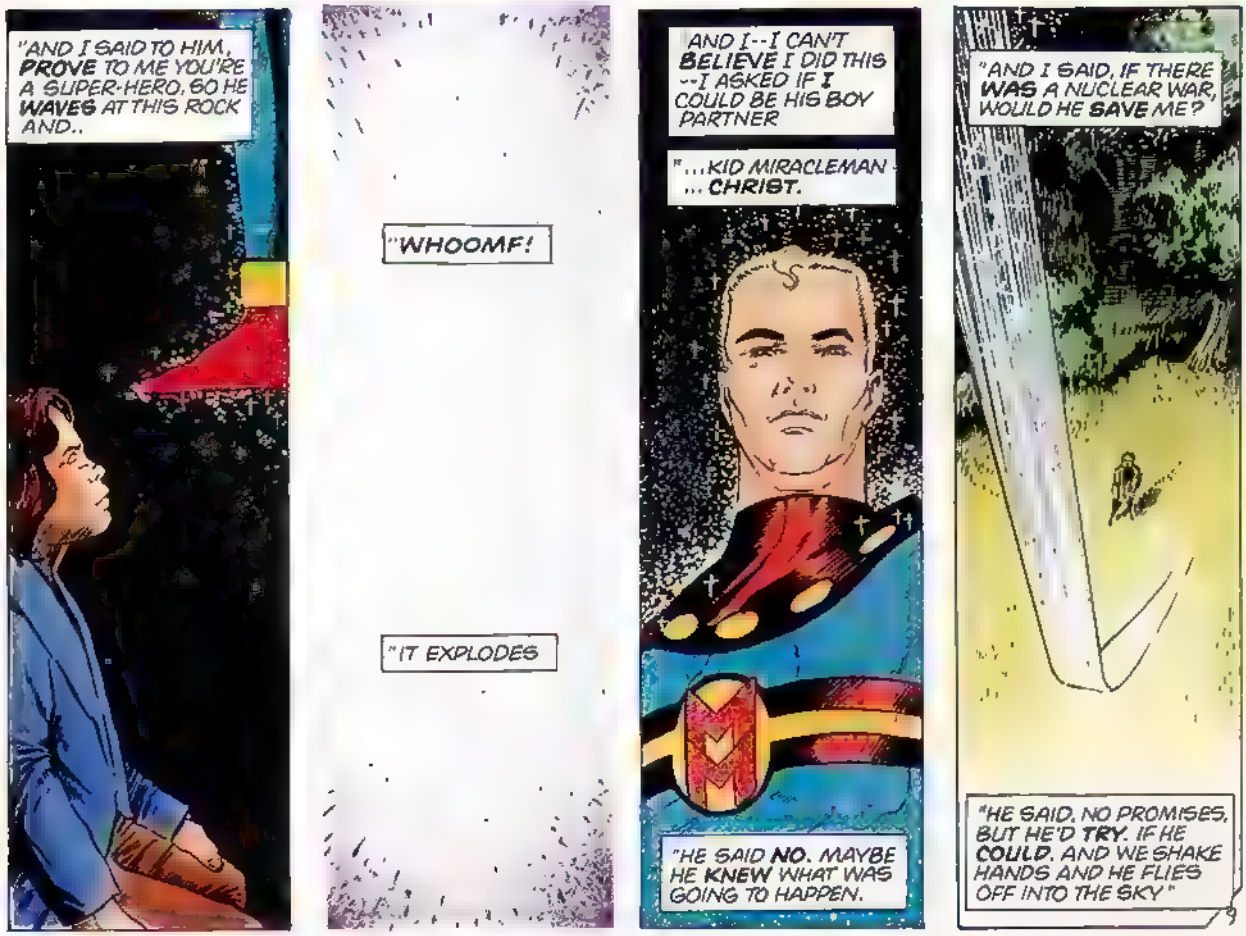
THAT WAS GARRY
HE USED TO CALL ME ANNIE, WHEN WE WERE YOUNGER. 'CAUSE OF MY NAME. JASON OAKEY. ANNIE OAKLEY.

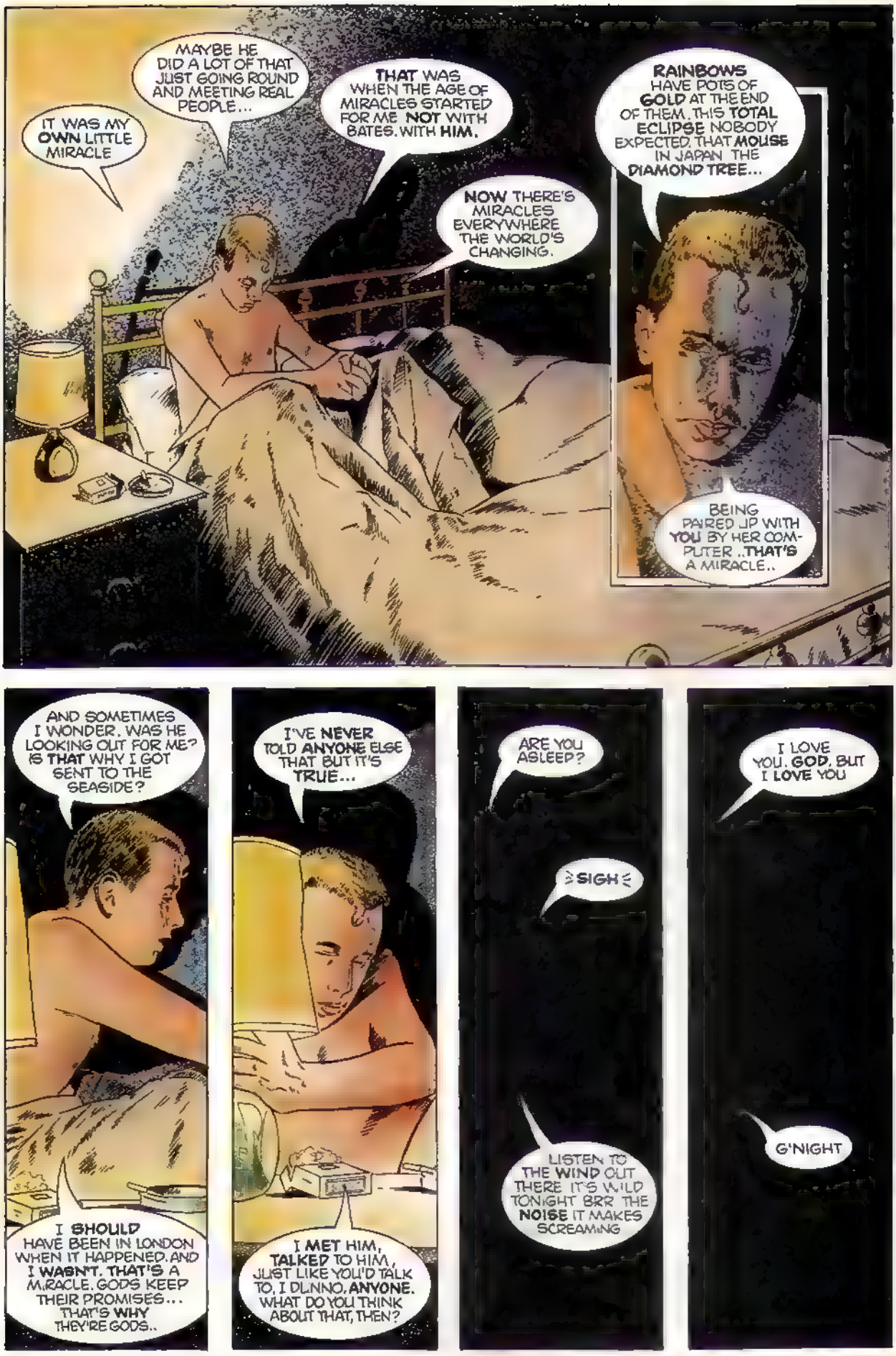
"AND I WAS TWO HUNDRED MILES AWAY, LISTENING TO THE SEAGULLS, THINKING ABOUT WHAT A GREAT TIME THEY MUST HAVE BEEN HAVING.

"I POSTED GARRY'S CARD. WHEN I GOT BACK AUNT MILLIE SAID·
THERE'S BEEN SOME TROUBLE IN LONDON.

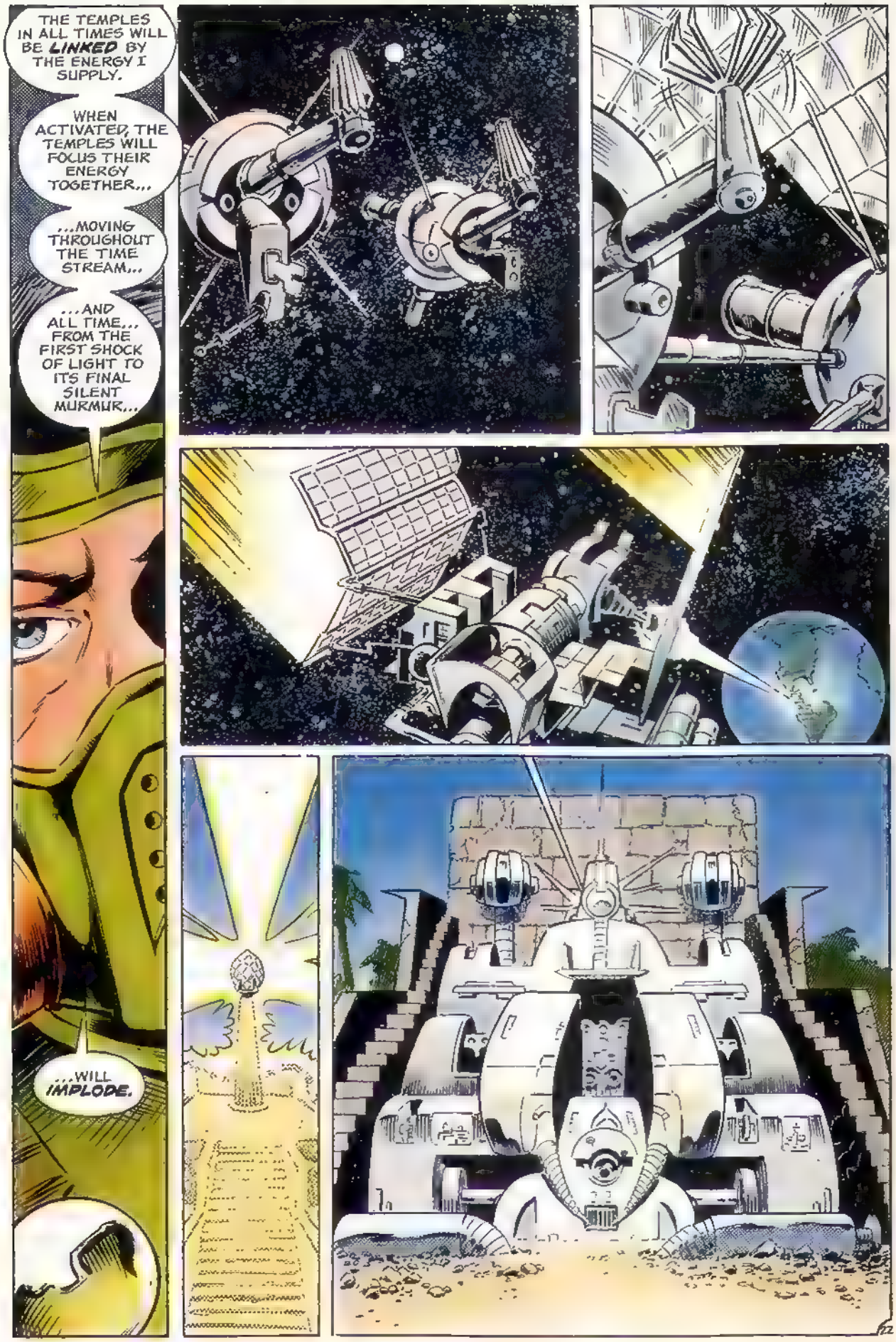
"SHE SAID SHE THOUGHT IT WAS THE RUSSIANS. THERE WAS A NEWSFLASH ON RADIO 2, AND THEN IT WENT DEAD.
"THE LOCAL STATIONS WERE STILL BROADCASTING, BUT THEY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON EITHER
"I WENT UP TO MY ROOM."

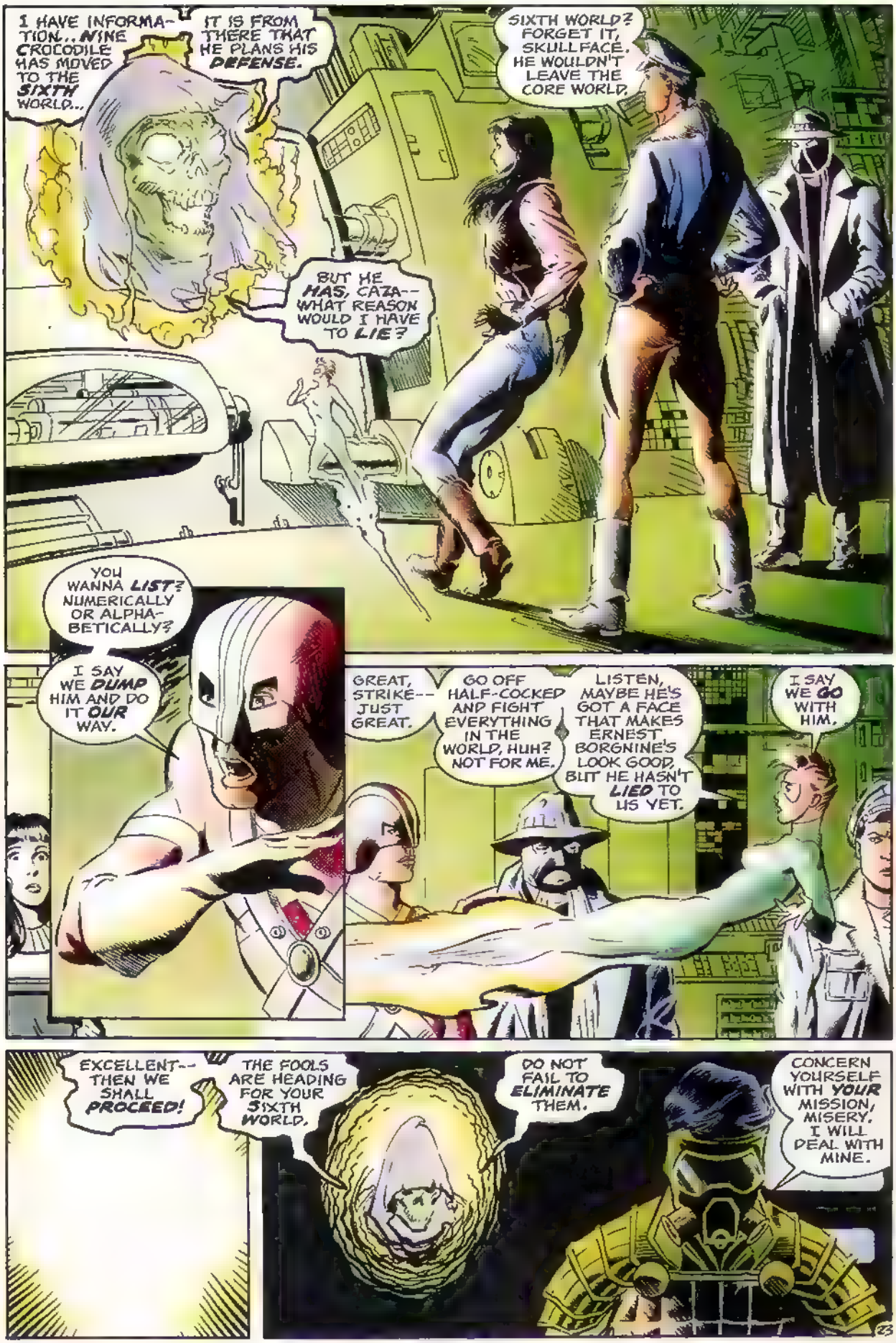

AND I THOUGHT ABOUT THE FIRST IMPORTANT THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TO ME.
I'VE NEVER TOLD ANYONE THIS BEFORE LONDON, I THOUGHT MAYBE I'D IMAGINED IT.
AFTER LONDON... I THOUGHT OTHER PEOPLE WOULD THINK I'D MADE IT UP... TO BE IMPORTANT.
"I WAS NINE OR TEN
"I HAD THIS PLACE IN EPPING FOREST IN A HOLLOW TREE. DON'T LAUGH. IT WAS MY BOMB SHELTER...
"IN CASE OF NUCLEAR WAR. I HAD HALF A PACKET OF TOFFOS, A PEA SHOOTER, A COPY OF FIESTA, SOME FAGS
"AND I WENT DOWN THERE ONE NIGHT AND I SAW HIM ALL GLITTERY AND SHINY. AND I SPOKE TO HIM


"AND I SAID TO HIM, PROVE TO ME YOU'RE A SUPER-HERO, SO HE WAVES AT THIS ROCK AND..
"WHOOMF!
"IT EXPLODES
AND I--I CAN'T BELIEVE I DID THIS --I ASKED IF I COULD BE HIS BOY PARTNER
"...KID MIRACLEMAN ... CHRIST.
"HE SAID NO. MAYBE HE KNEW WHAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN.
"AND I SAID, IF THERE WAS A NUCLEAR WAR, WOULD HE SAVE ME?
"HE SAID, NO PROMISES, BUT HE'D TRY. IF HE COULD. AND WE SHAKE HANDS AND HE FLIES OFF INTO THE SKY"


IT WAS MY OWN LITTLE MIRACLE
MAYBE HE DID A LOT OF THAT JUST GOING ROUND AND MEETING REAL PEOPLE...
THAT WAS WHEN THE AGE OF MIRACLES STARTED FOR ME NOT WITH BATES. WITH HIM.
NOW THERE'S MIRACLES EVERYWHERE THE WORLD'S CHANGING.
RAINBOWS HAVE POTS OF GOLD AT THE END OF THEM. THIS TOTAL ECLIPSE NOBODY EXPECTED, THAT MOUSE IN JAPAN THE DIAMOND TREE...
BEING PAIRED UP WITH YOU BY HER COMPUTER ..THAT'S A MIRACLE..
AND SOMETIMES I WONDER. WAS HE LOOKING OUT FOR ME? IS THAT WHY I GOT SENT TO THE SEASIDE?
I SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN LONDON WHEN IT HAPPENED. AND I WASN'T. THAT'S A MIRACLE. GODS KEEP THEIR PROMISES... THAT'S WHY THEY'RE GODS..
I'VE NEVER TOLD ANYONE ELSE THAT BUT IT'S TRUE...
I MET HIM, TALKED TO HIM, JUST LIKE YOU'D TALK TO, I DUNNO, ANYONE. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THAT, THEN?
ARE YOU ASLEEP?
SIGH
LISTEN TO THE WIND OUT THERE IT'S WILD TONIGHT BRR THE NOISE IT MAKES SCREAMING
I LOVE YOU, GOD, BUT I LOVE YOU
G'NIGHT

MEANWHILE...
WE HAVE ACHIEVED PARTIAL SUCCESS, BUT WE MUST STILL COMPLETE OUR MISSION.
TELL US SOMETHING WE DON'T KNOW ALREADY.
THE SATELLITES MUST BE DESTROYED.. AND TO DO SO WE MUST LEARN WHAT POWERS THEM.
RETURN TO THE GRAND CANYON -- IT WAS THERE THAT ZZED FIRST CONCEIVED THE SATELLITES' SCHEMATICS.
THAT TRUE?
THAT'S WHERE WE FIRST MET ZZED.
I JUST DON'T KNOW IF WE SHOULD LEAVE THE TEMPLE, IF CROCODILE'S MEN RETURN...
LISTEN, BLONDIE -- I'M SICKA THIS CRAP. SO IF WE C'N FINISH ALLIGATOR-BREATH OFF FAST--
--I WANT IN --NOW!
I SAY WE GO TO THE CANYON AN' BLAST IT TO HELL.
MISERY DID AS HE PROMISED. EXCELLENT.
ZZED'S MACHINES ONLY POSSESSED SOME OF THE POWER I NEED. MY MACHINES MUST SUPPLY THE REST.
21

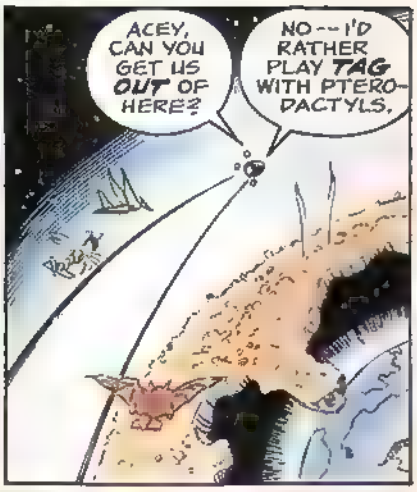

THE TEMPLES IN ALL TIMES WILL BE LINKED BY THE ENERGY I SUPPLY.
WHEN ACTIVATED, THE TEMPLES WILL FOCUS THEIR ENERGY TOGETHER...
...MOVING THROUGHOUT THE TIME STREAM...
...AND ALL TIME... FROM THE FIRST SHOCK OF LIGHT TO ITS FINAL SILENT MURMUR...
...WILL IMPLODE.

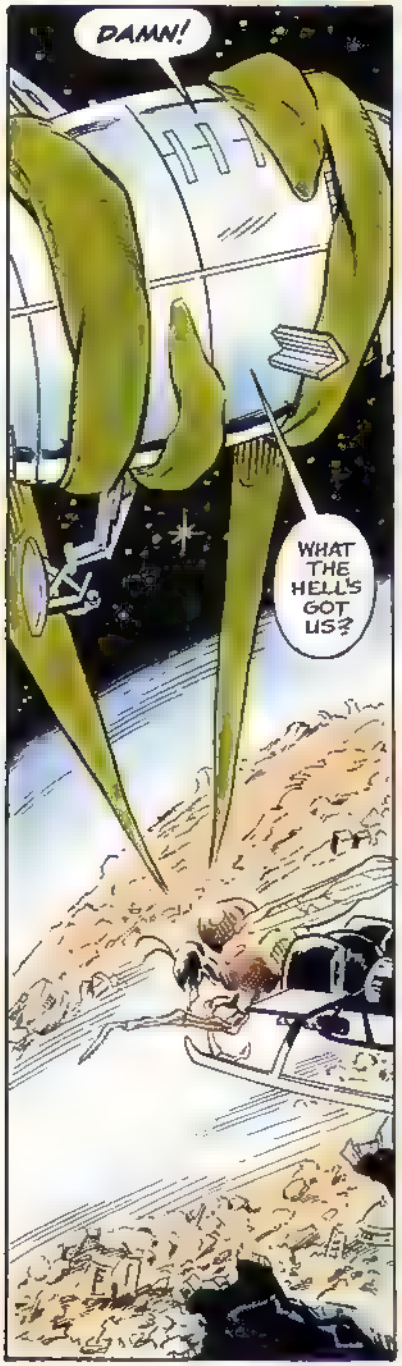

I HAVE INFORMATION.. NINE CROCODILE HAS MOVED TO THE SIXTH WORLD..
IT IS FROM THERE THAT HE PLANS HIS DEFENSE.
SIXTH WORLD? FORGET IT, SKULLFACE. HE WOULDN'T LEAVE THE CORE WORLD.
BUT HE HAS, CAZA-- WHAT REASON WOULD I HAVE TO LIE?
YOU WANNA LIST? NUMERICALLY OR ALPHABETICALLY?
I SAY WE DUMP HIM AND DO IT OUR WAY.
GREAT, STRIKE-- JUST GREAT.
GO OFF HALF-COCKED AND FIGHT EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD, HUH? NOT FOR ME.
LISTEN, MAYBE HE'S GOT A FACE THAT MAKES ERNEST BORGNINE'S LOOK GOOD, BUT HE HASN'T LIED TO US YET.
I SAY WE GO WITH HIM.
EXCELLENT-- THEN WE SHALL PROCEED!
THE FOOLS ARE HEADING FOR YOUR SIXTH WORLD.
DO NOT FAIL TO ELIMINATE THEM.
CONCERN YOURSELF WITH YOUR MISSION, MISERY. I WILL DEAL WITH MINE.

ACE, WHAT IN HELL ARE THOSE?
THE SIXTH SPHERE--DOXY-GLITCHES OF ALL KINDS.
IT'S AN ENTIRE WORLD OF TIME ANOMOLIES.
AND IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE COMING RIGHT AT US.
THEY WERE WAITING FOR US, GUYS--
AND IT DOESN'T TAKE ALBERT EINSTEIN TO FIGURE OUT THAT WE'VE BEEN SET UP.
MISERY'S SPOTS REMAIN AS WELL-DEFINED AS EVER.
VERY WELL--HE MUST BE DEALT WITH.
CROC MUST'VE GOTTEN TO HIM.
DAMMIT --HOW DO WE GET OUT OF THIS?
OKAY, MISERY--LAUGH UP YOUR DAMN CLOAK NOW, 'CAUSE IF I EVER GET MY MITTS ON YOU--
--I SWEAR TO GOD I'LL BREAK YOUR SCRAWNY NECK.
"I REST IN SILENCE, MY MIND IN TURMOIL TRYING TO SORT OUT VARYING REALITIES. NOISE INTRUDES, FORCING MY ATTENTION
"THERE IS AN EMERGENCY BEYOND THE CORRIDOR. I AM NEEDED!"
HANG ON, BOYS AND GIRLS--
THIS AIN'T GONNA BE EASY!

JUST WAIT. DON'T GET IMPATIENT.
I'M OPENING A DOOR NOW.
SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING AROUND FOR? GO!
"AND DON'T FORGET TO WRITE!"
CHANG

SCREEEE

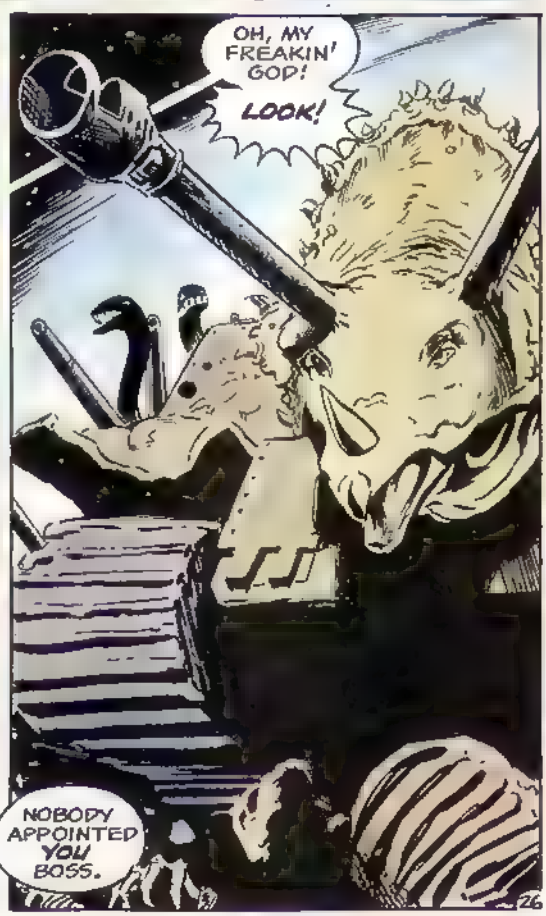

ACEY, CAN YOU GET US OUT OF HERE?
NO--I'D RATHER PLAY TAG WITH PTERODACTYLS.


DAMN!
WHAT THE HELL'S GOT US?

WISH I KNEW...BUT IT'S HOLDING US TIGHT.
HAVEN'T GOT ENOUGH POWER TO PULL FREE.

JUST GET US THE HELL OUT OF HERE.
WE'LL DO THE REST.

EVERYONE FAN OUT--
--BUT KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN.
DRY UP, IMPULSE.


OH, MY FREAKIN' GOD!
LOOK!
NOBODY APPOINTED YOU BOSS.

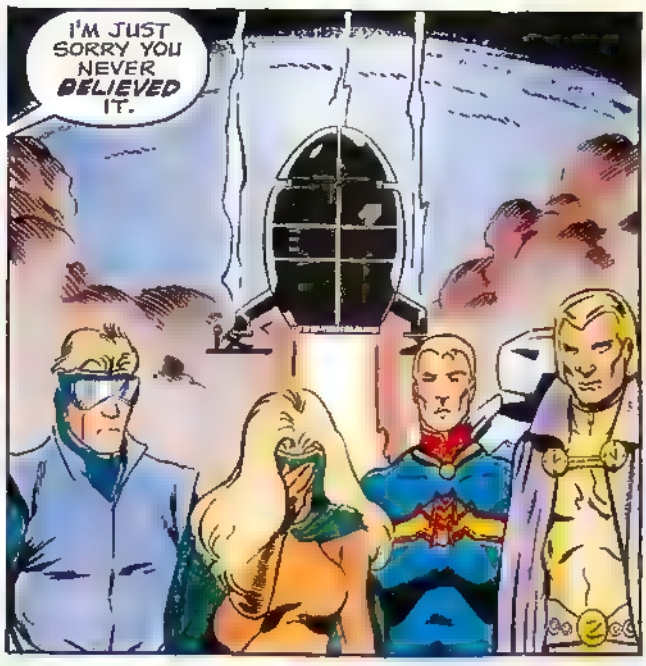
IGNORE WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE-- JUST KEEP COOL.
IF IT'S ALIVE, WE CAN KILL IT.
IF IT'S A MACHINE, WE CAN BLOW IT UP.
WHAT IF IT'S BOTH?
THERE'S ALWAYS PRAYER!
THEY'RE MOVING IN.
WE'RE NOT STOPPING THEM.
ZZZAT!
WE DON'T EXPECT TO...
JUST TRY TO DELAY THEM UNTIL I CAN BOOST UP THE A.C.E.'S ENGINES AND BLAST US OFF OF HERE.
DENNIS, YOU NEED HELP?
NAH-- I GOT THIS COVERED.
DO YOUR GOOD DEEDS ON SOMEONE ELSE.
OH, CRAP-- SARGE ?!?
GET BACK, YOU YOUNG FOOL!
OH, LORD-- I'VE GOT TO HELP HIM--
I CAN'T, LEO--
ONE OF US'S ALREADY DIED BECAUSE WE DID NOTHING.
I CAN'T LET SARGE GO WITHOUT TRYING.

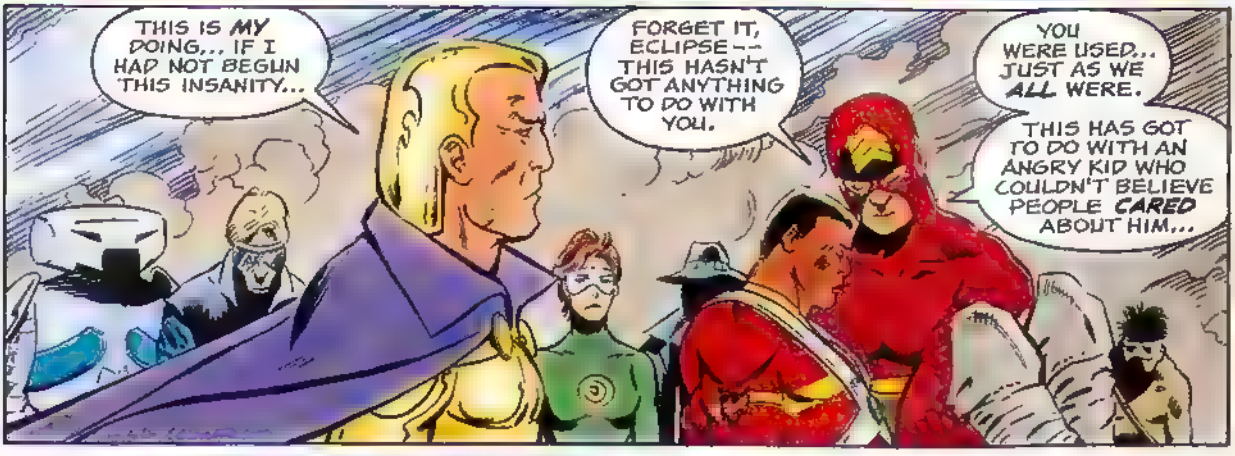
HANG ON, SCOTT-- I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.
CRRAMM
STOP SQUIRMING, YOU FOOLS. LET ME GET A BEAD ON HIM.
I--I CAN'T DO IT... TOO HARD... TOO HARD...
I'M COMIN', MAN-- HOLD ON. DON'T GIVE UP. DON'T GIVE UP!
AGGGHHHH!
DENNIS ?!?
KRACKK!
UNHHH-- I'M OKAY... JUST A FLESH WOUND.
NEED A MOMENT TO CLEAR MY HEAD.
OKAY... OKAY...
...LET ME AT IT.
EVERYONE ELSE--GET THE HELL BACK!

BALLAMMM!
ARMS ARE SO WEAK... BUT I CAN'T LET THEM KNOW IT.
HARD EVEN BREATHING RIGHT...
...BUT IF I DON'T TAKE CARE A' THIS DAMN TANK--
--IT'LL BLOW EVERYONE ELSE TO HELL 'N BACK!
GET BACK INTO THE A.C.E. MOVE IT-- NOW!
DO WHAT HE SAYS... HEAD FOR THE A.C.E.
ACE'S GOTTEN IT FREE...
C'MON-- EVERYBODY MOVE!
I'LL LAND HER IN THE CLEARING A MILE FROM HERE.
HURRY UP AND LET'S GET OF THIS HELL HOLE.
YOU OKAY, SCOTT?
AGGGHH! MY SHOULDER!
HANG IN THERE, LAD... JUST DON'T LET GO.
THERE! I GOT IT.
SCOTT!
SCOTT?
MY GOD!

CAN YOU HEAR ME, BOY?
HEY, KID-- C'MON. IT WAS JUST A FLESH WOUND.
I KNOW, I KNOW...IT JUST STINGS LIKE HELL.
OH, GOD--
DENNIS ?
YOU GODDAM IDIOT!
GET OFF THERE!
YEAH, YEAH--AND LET IT BLOW YOU TO HELL? FORGET IT, MAN.
NOW SHUT UP AND LEMME DO WHAT I GOTTA DO.
DENNIS !
I SAID IT BEFORE, MAN--ALL OF YOU, SHUT UP!
I GOTTA CHANGE THIS MUTHA'S DIRECTION... I CAN'T LET IT NEAR YOU.
I'M DOIN' IT, MAN... I'M DOIN' IT!

BLAMMOOOO!
OH, MY GOD!
DENNIS!
DENNIS!
H-HE'S NOT MOVING.
HOW IS THE BOY?
HE SAVED US, YOU KNOW.
C'MON DENNIS-- IT'LL BE OKAY.
TELL ME YOU'LL BE OKAY.
YEAH,.. IT'LL BE FINE, SCOTT.
I-I WANTED TO BE SO MUCH LIKE SARGE,.. WANTED TO BE A HERO... OH, GOD, MAN--
HEY,.. I'M SORRY, MAN,.. SORRY FOR SCREWIN' UP,.. SORRY FOR EVERY-THING...
--I'M SORRY,..SO VNNHHH...
NO!
NO!




THIS IS MY DOING... IF I HAD NOT BEGUN THIS INSANITY...
FORGET IT, ECLIPSE -- THIS HASN'T GOT ANYTHING TO DO WITH YOU.
YOU WERE USED... JUST AS WE ALL WERE.
THIS HAS GOT TO DO WITH AN ANGRY KID WHO COULDN'T BELIEVE PEOPLE CARED ABOUT HIM...

...AND IT HAS TO DO WITH PEOPLE SO WRAPPED UP FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT THAT WE COULDN'T SEE HOW DEPENDENT WE ARE ON EACH OTHER.
AND THIS HAS TO DO WITH TWO OTHERS WHO COULDN'T CARE LESS ABOUT TWO BILLION LIVES.
THEY'RE THE CAUSE OF THIS.

NEXT ISSUE: FINAL ECLIPSE!

California, Here I Come!

by Dean Mullaney

When Cat Yronwode and I joined forces in December 1981, we put our heads together to decide where to relocate Eclipse. I've always been a great admirer of Al Jolson, and Cat is a San Francisco native, so California it was. My brother Jan remained in New York, holding down the economic front. Before we could make the final move, though, there was a brief stay in Willow Springs, Missouri, Cat's home at the time. Some previous personal obligations then led us, for ten months, to situate Eclipse's editorial office in America's heartland, Columbia, Missouri.

It was while we were in Columbia that Mark Evanier entered our lives on a permanent basis. Mark co-edited the **Destroyer Duck** benefit comic book in 1981 (where, coincidentally enough, **Groo** made his first appearance), but our direct dealings with him had been limited.

Now, everybody knows Mark Evanier. Not only is he the co-creator of such stalwart heroes as **Crossfire** and **The DNAgents** (all of whom will be back soon enough, I promise), but he "translates" **Groo** for Sergio Aragones, writes more television shows than I could list in the four pages allotted me here, and on top of it all, is the secret scripter of some of your favorite newspaper comic strips.

It's been suggested that, like Will Rogers, Mark has never met a person he didn't like. He says there's one exception, but I'm not telling who that person might be, although I think many of you can guess!

At any rate, Mark and Will Meugniot came to us, through their agent Mike Friedrich of Star*Reach, with a proposal for a superhero team. We had never previously published a superhero team series. It wasn't that we didn't want to, but rather that we were more interested in publishing the kind of material other companies were not offering. **The DNAgents**, however, struck us as a unique, solid concept.

Upon visiting Mark's Los Angeles home for the first time, what stuck in my mind most was not necessarily the walls stacked with books, comics, videotapes, and records, nor the juke box and pin-ball machine in the living room, nor the priceless original comics art all over the place, nor the beautiful 1920s

tiles throughout the house. No, what I remember most was a small collection of figural magnets on Mark's refrigerator. You may laugh now, in 1988, because you can't go to a store these days without those damned magnets popping everywhere you look, but Mark's then-budding collection was my first encounter with this odd artifact. (Then again, Mark also had a plate of plastic spaghetti frozen in mid-air on his counter-top, so he obviously has a penchant for kitchen novelties!)

Over the years, I've seen Mark's refrigerator taken over by magnets representing every conceivable object, from a miniature piece of chocolate cake to a tiny Garfield. Mark claims that he doesn't buy the magnets. He says that people just give him magnets when they come to visit (and in fact, Cat and I are guilty of adding to his collection), but for some reason, I have this vision of Mark going down to the local convenience store at two in the morning to buy the latest variety. After all, I'm sure that like any other collectible, each new piece is only in distribution for a limited time. It's not too far a leap of imagination to picture Mark sitting in his car, hour after hour, night after night, waiting for the distributor's truck; before long, he's forgotten to shave, his diet consists only of corn chips brought by that same truck, and eventually he hijacks the truck wanting more, more, more...magnets.

Gee, it could almost be one of Mark's **Crossfire** plots!

Until we hooked up with Mark, it had been our editorial stance to publish comics aimed at fans older than those reading traditional newsstand comics. We realized that if Eclipse was going to expand—which we wanted it to do—we needed to start attracting readers as an earlier age. We made a very conscious decision to begin offering different comics for different age groups, not, as some publishers have tried, to make every comic book all things to all people. That, we knew, didn't work. It was philosophies such as those that created comics aimed at the lowest common denominator.

It was at this time that Cat eased out of her other writing and freelance editorial jobs and began assuming more and more of the editorial duties at Eclipse. As the business grew, so did our need for strong editorial guidance. I'm not ashamed to say that she's a better editor than I am. She is, and it was her interest in color and knowledge of printing that was largely responsible for what was to come.

With the publication of **The DNAgents** we entered our first expansion period. Simultaneously, we introduced **Eclipse Monthly**, the color comic book replacement for **Eclipse Magazine**.

Some features made it into their own title, such as Max Collins' and Terry Beatty's **Ms. Tree** (now celebrating its 50th issue anniversary!), while others made the transition from the black-and-white magazine to color, notably Trina Robbins' adaptation of Sax Rohmer's "Dope", and an odd, upbeat non-costumed hero named The Masked Man by B.C. Boyer.

Actually, when B.C. first sent us his character as a blind submission in 1983, the series was called "White Collar Man." I suggested changing the name to "The Masked Man," feeling somewhat like Captain Joe Patterson of the New York *News* when he renamed Chester Gould's "Plainclothes Tracy" to "Dick Tracy." Aside from a full page illustration of hero Dick Carstairs and his sidekick, Barney McAllister, there was no other artwork included in the presentation. B.C. was too shy to pitch himself as a writer/artist to us. After seeing samples of his storytelling, however, Cat and I were convinced that this guy had what was necessary.

As we later found out, artistic talent runs in his family; his father, Charles Boyer (pronounced as an American name, not like the French actor's!), was the head scenic painter at Disneyland from the park's opening in 1954, and had been chosen to paint Walt Disney's official portrait!

B.C. is one of the nicest people we've ever met. He's actually as upbeat, as warm, (and yes, as naive), as his stories, and although many fans have compared his work to that of Will Eisner, B.C. Boyer had never seen

Aztec Ace ™ Doug Moench. Art © 1988 Dan Day

an Eisner **Spirit** story until long after he had created **The Masked Man**. When Cat showed him Eisner's stuff, he was naturally impressed. In an age of cynicism and extreme violence, Bruce is a very welcome sight. He's also a great practical joker. If you're ever at the yearly San Diego Comics Convention, try to catch him there.

Speaking of Will Eisner, we were excited when Cat located an unpublished Eisner comic book from 1948 in Will's vault—and really thrilled when Will gave us permission to print it, at long last. The convoluted history of **John Law, Detective** is told in the April 1983 Eclipse comic, so I'll refer you there.

By this point, we were going full swing. **Destroyer Duck** was now a continuing series by Steve Gerber and Jack Kirby, the adventures of **Sabre** were presented by Don McGregor and Billy Graham, and we were very fortunate and proud to present Jerry Siegel's **The Starling** as the back-up series in **Destroyer Duck**.

In July 1983 it was finally time to make our long-planned move to California. Loading everything both of us owned into a 24-foot rental truck, we eased our way West until we couldn't go any farther, settling in the small Russian River town of Guerneville, deep among the redwoods, and only a few miles inland from the Pacific Ocean.

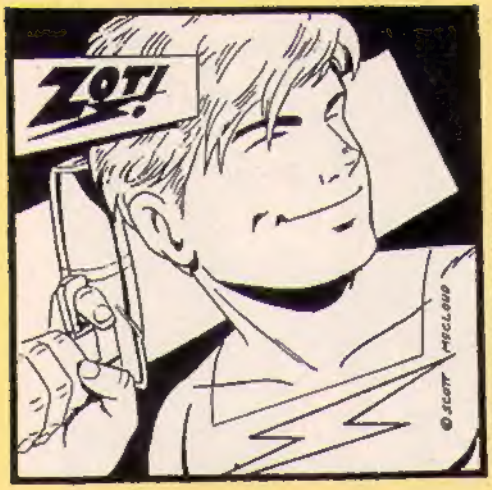
During the rest of 1983 Cat, Jan, and I plotted our 1984 schedule, which, looking back at it, still amazes me. In that year we introduced, among other things, Scott McCloud's **Zot!**, Doug Moench's **Aztec Ace**, and Marshall Rogers' **Cap'n Quick and a Foozle**. The color collection of Englehart and Rogers' **Coyote** marked our return to graphic novels, and we published our first trade paperback book, **Women and the Comics** by Cat and Trina Robbins (a book which, incidentally, will be available soon in a much needed revised edition).

Doug Moench, as if you couldn't tell from his stories, is one of the most fascinating people in comics. Along with Cat and Denny O'Neil, he is a source of endless information and interesting conversation. In any field of interest, you often encounter people who know little, if anything, about subjects beyond the scope of their specialty. Not so with Doug. After a visit to Doug and Debbie Moench's home for a weekend, you feel as though you've returned from a combination amusement park and library. During one visit, Doug, Cat and I played pinball on his nifty-keen machine for hours on end, while discussing everything from ancient Mayan ruins to the legacy of Aleister Crowley.

Doug's a guy after my own heart. He'll find any excuse to buy a book on a new subject. For the initial run of **Aztec Ace**, Doug, Cat, and I must have collectively spent thousands of dollars buying books which we justified as "research." It got to the point where Doug's bookcases kept growing upward and upward, while Cat and I filled an entire shed with bound paper products. Unfortunately for Cat and I, the Guerneville flood that turned our town into one giant swimming pool in early 1986 also swept that shed away. Doug, luckily, still has his library. The last time I was there, Doug was threatening his neighbors with a skyscraper-like addition to house his collection! I've got this sneaking suspicion that the upcoming return of **Aztec Ace** will spawn a new "research" spree by all of us!

Whereas I had known Doug for many years before we started **Aztec Ace**, Scott McCloud came to us through a blind mail submission, just as had B.C. Boyer. We receive an incredible number of submissions every week, and while there are many people with promise among them, it's rare to find an unknown with talents and foresight as maturely developed as was Scott's when he came to us with **Zot!**.

Scott was only 22 when we met him, and he had just completed 14 months in DC's production department. He had been developing **Zot!** for quite some time and pitched it to the publishers who would allow him to retain the copyright ownership. Cat and I decided we wanted to publish **Zot!** before we even finished reading the proposal. In preparing for a two-



volume collection of the ten-issue color run of **Zot!**, I went back and reread them, and while I knew how it ended, Scott still managed to take me through every possible emotion along the way. I hope it doesn't sound like a bunch of hype, but I honestly believe **Zot!** to be one of the highest achievements in comics history, and Scott one of our great treasures.

In late 1984, the comics industry experienced an incredible crash. Never mind the reasons for it—let's just say one of the larger players in the field didn't like sharing the market with "upstarts" like Eclipse, Pacific Comics, and others. One of the major results of this crash was the demise of Pacific Comics of San Diego, run by Bill and Steve Schanes. Rumors of Pacific's imminent demise were circulating for months, and when the call came in September that they had closed their doors, I immediately phoned Steve Schanes and negotiated for Eclipse to purchase most of Pacific's titles. I flew down that day, checkbook in hand. I stopped off in Los Angeles first, met with Dave Stevens and signed a contract for **The Rocketeer**, and proceeded to San Diego. Two days later, I was on a plane back to San Francisco with color negatives for, among other projects, **Groo, Mr. Monster, Strange Days, Axel Pressbutton, Siegel & Shuster: Dateline 1930s**, and **Somerset Holmes**. Steve Schanes and his wife Ann Fera were very gracious hosts during my brief stay.

We guaranteed payment to all of Pacific's writers and artists, and, by November, we had half a dozen former Pacific titles added to our line-up!

By February, we had firmed up plans to publish the final issues of the Bruce Jones/April Campbell titles **Twisted Tales** and **Alien Worlds** originally designed for Pacific. Since Eclipse was much smaller then than it is now, we just didn't have the resources to swallow an entire other company's output at once. One of the interesting untold stories from that period has to do with some heavy-duty music industry people who invested in **Twisted Tales**. Jan casually mentioned to some of his fellow musicians that we wanted to assume publication of more Pacific titles but didn't have the resources. Surprisingly enough, some of them turned out to be big comics fans in addition to being rock stars. They wanted to test the waters for jumping into the comics industry and so we formed a trial company with them, called Independent Comics Group, to publish **Twisted Tales**.

To make a long story short, while **Twisted Tales** proved successful, these musicians soon had new tours starting, and after a while their dreams of becoming comics impressarios gave way to the more glamorous prospect of remaining rock stars, while keeping comics as their hobby.

Around this time we realized that we needed more people on staff (no kidding!). Various interns were working at Eclipse during this period, but none turned out to be permanently interested...or qualified. That is, until Sean Deming walked through the door.

Sean began as an intern in February 1985, and if you read Cat's editorials from that time, you'll learn that Sean got a full-time position because he was the only one in the office who could find the "hidden" electrical sockets. Actually, he had a lot more in his resumé than that. Sean's one of the few people I've ever met who can think, react, and move as fast as Cat and I can under pressure. In a deadline business like comics, that's an attribute above most others. So what if he needs the computer's spell-checker to make his documents readable?—so do many writers in the field! Seriously, most of us in the comics industry are here because we love comics and enjoy putting them together. In a small, closely-knit office like ours, it's particularly important that everyone not only get along, but genuinely like each other. I can't think of many people I've met in the last five years whom I like as much as Sean. He also has more patience than any of us here and plays convincing psychopaths in local plays to boot!

Next Issue: the staff expands again as Bruce Palley joins the inner sanctum, and we have Editors Up the Kazoo! Plus the coming of Miracleman, Scout, and Airboy—and the return of the Independent Comics Group—in the next and final chapter in this series on Eclipse's first ten years.

WHO'S WHO
IN TOTAL ECLIPSE

Dr. Eclipse The immortal Zzed was struck by a diluted cosmic ray which, instead of killing him, gave him great power.

The evil scientist Emil Gargunza twisted Mike Moran's life to suit his own needs. It backfired. **Miracleman**

Aztec Ace In his Azure Crosstime Express, Caza crosses time and space to keep the past safe from the future.

Aztec Ace's arch enemy would destroy time itself to rule his limbo in peace. **Nine-Crocodile**

Bridget Stolen from 1940, Bridget Kronopoulous crowned herself queen of Egypt and now accompanies Aztec Ace in his battles.

Ace's former lab assistant now finds himself with no body—and with the implanted persona of Sigmund Freud in his 23rd century brain. **Head**

Black Terror Orrin Murphy fights crime on a corrupt world where Al Capone is the vice-president of the U.S.

Air Fighter Ronald Britain almost died in an accident, but advanced Nelson Aviation cyborg armor allows him to continue life. **Iron Ace**

Hirota David Nelson II's first WWII "kill," Japanese ace Saburo Hirota went on to become a trusted friend and tutor for the young Davy Nelson.

A mute Bogantillan freedom fighter, Marisa Ortega salvaged an old chopper of Skywolf's and now emulates him. **La Lupina**

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Rebirth

It comes when least expected, snatching the immortal Zzed from his long-awaited suicide. The death beam with the power to destroy both Zzed and the universe has been intercepted by Tachyon, who vanished in a blinding flash.

Now the remains of that cosmic energy have found their intended target, and Zzed bathes in the agonizing glow, screaming. Our heroes can only watch and wait as the stunning transformation takes place.

Zzed is no more.

In his place is a new being, Dr. Eclipse, blessed with the knowledge and power of untold galaxies. But there is still a grave danger: Nine-Crocodile's temple machinery threatens the very fabric of time itself. Yet another hero must die if the universe is to be saved. Billions of lives hang in the balance.

Total Eclipse

It's Eclipse Comics' Tenth Anniversary. In this and future issues, you'll encounter Airboy, Valkyrie, Skywolf, Miracleman, The Prowler, Strike, the Heap, Aztec Ace and virtually every star from Eclipse's first decade of innovative comics publishing.

Marv Wolfman, writer, is the author of *The New Teen Titans*, *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, *Tomb of Dracula*, and countless other acclaimed comic books. The Zzed saga is his most intricate plot to date.

Bo Hampton, pencil artist, is well-known for his detailed linework and powerful layouts in books such as *Airboy*, *Lost Planet*, *Luger*, and *The New Mutants*. *Total Eclipse* is a new peak in his artistic development.

Rick Bryant, ink artist, has graced the pages of *Miracleman*, *Marvel Fanfare*, *Moon Knight*, and *World of Krypton*. In *Total Eclipse*, he perfectly complements Hampton's detail with his own dynamic style.

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